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Mercy to babes

Mr. Henry Green  
Philadelphia

Oct 7<sup>th</sup> 1850









# Mercy to Babes:

A P L E A

FOR THE

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM OF INFANTS,

ADDRESSED

TO THOSE WHO DOUBT AND THOSE WHO DENY

THE VALIDITY OF THAT PRACTICE,

UPON THE GROUNDS OF THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM,  
AND THE ETERNAL SENSE OF HOLY WRIT,  
AND OF THE DOMESTIC, SOCIAL, AND  
RELIGIOUS NATURE OF MAN.

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BY WILLIAM ADAMS, S. T. P.

FRESBYTER OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE  
DIOCESE OF WISCONSIN.

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“ Mercy is twice blessed,  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.”

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1847.

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## PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

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To those who may read this treatise upon the subject of infant baptism, the author wishes to submit some preliminary considerations as regards both his own position and the mode in which he wishes to approach the subject.

And the first and most important is this: *he comes not to the subject as a controversialist.* He has the strongest convictions of the evil of that, which in the present day is called "controversy." He sees that in the majority of cases it is not a discussion of the truth, to be perused and weighed by the layman of either side, but a personal conflict between two minds for victory, regarded by themselves and by their respective partizans solely in the light of champions of party and intellectual gladiators. In the usual course of such combats, the writer has seen many evils. Strong assertions of fact where such facts do not exist; innocently made, because taken upon the authority or argumentation of standard writers of the sect, and yet untrue and doing all the work of falsehood. Persevering imputations of consequences, which *logically* should follow, and yet do not, because our nature, originally formed of God, does and will in practice correct, to some degree, the natural and logical effects of the worst doctrines. Personal imputations then of

evil motives, and venomous assaults upon character and reputation ; and, worst of all, the little paltry literary manœuvring that attends upon all such combats, the small logic and smaller wit, the flippancy and personal snubbing which nowadays seem inevitable to such argumentation, and because of which, at the present day, the grave, the sober, the earnest, and the high minded, detest the very name of controversy justly and with sufficient cause.

These evils, some of them unavoidable in "controversy," at all times, and some the peculiar products of our own age, might be borne with, if controversy were of any probable service. But when we look at the state of Christianity in our days, sect-divided into a multitude of jarring fragments, because of this fact, the natural consequences of controversy seem to attend upon it in their worst form, and secondly, it seems wholly useless. For the men most likely to enter into controversy and carry it on with ability, the clergy of the various denominations, are bound and pledged to their several opinions, be they true or false, by ties which would require a great deal more than the argumentation of one antagonist mind to break the slightest of them. The clergyman who has inclination and abilities to defend his opinions, which are the opinions of his sect, is bound to them by affections, by his friendships, by his interests : all these things, which must have their weight, tie him down, and attach him in weightiest degree to that opinion he defends. These things must have their weight with all.

Moreover, the very subject of debate, in his opinion, is connected with the highest and holiest purposes, even with the salvation of the world ; and the fact that he sustains

it against a multitude of opponents, makes him almost unchangeable. Furthermore, when he has once entered into the field, if he has any appearance of success, right or wrong, he gets the applause of his denomination; he is a champion, so esteemed and so rewarded; however good and pious a man he may therefore be, vanity must come in, self-esteem and pride. The angry passions then are roused by the reply; and so the truth is forgotten, the man's own position is to be maintained, and that at all risks, and the strife goes on in this style till the sense of decency in the public permits them no longer to peruse abuse and violence couched in polished and courtly language. Who ever heard in this day of a controversy decided, or a controversialist converted by his opponent?

Again, if we look at it in another point of view, we shall see the inutility of controversy more plainly still. Controversy is a discussion. It is just the same as the pleading of a cause, save that the arguments are in writing. It therefore presupposes a judge having authority to decide. Where in the present state of Christianity is the judge? Between a Churchman and a Baptist, a Romanist and a Methodist, entering into controversy, where is the judge? Does any one suppose that because the Baptist, or Romanist, or Methodist champion, is vanquished by his opponents, that their very respectable denominations will turn round and determine that their peculiar distinguishing doctrines for which he combated, are unscriptural and untrue? Surely not; they will do no such thing. It would be the height of folly to expect it. They may by a great stretch of candor allow their champion to have been defeated, but it is the champion

personally, and not his cause. If there were a judge having authority, instead of antagonist sects merely, as is the case in controversies carried on between members of the same denomination, it would be otherwise; then the matter in dispute would be the matter decided upon, not the personal merits of the pleaders. If Christianity were one, controversy, as such, would be useful, whatsoever temptations there might be to the controversialist to fall into the faults above mentioned; inasmuch as principles once settled would henceforth be no longer mooted points, but be acted upon as principles of life. Now sect-rent as it is, there can be no decision between opposing sects, because there can be no judge.

But some one will say, Public Opinion is the judge. In matters of political concern it may be. For then there is an ultimate court of appeal, and an ultimate authority to decide and settle disputes, and men must bow to its decisions. But religion in this country is by the law of the land a matter between a man and his conscience. My neighbor, therefore, by the law of the land is no judge of my religious opinions; has no authority at all; I may hold any opinions I please, on any motives I please, and with any realization of them in practice I please, provided they are not opposed to the morality of common law; that is, provided they are neither a "nuisance" or an "injury" to my neighbor. He has therefore no authority to decide upon them, whether right or wrong, within these limits; and all respectable sects keep within these. No arithmetic therefore can give to my neighbor collectively, that is, the Public, the right which the one individual does not possess legally. My neighbor may



think my opinions or my practice upon these opinions very silly or very pernicious, but except he can prove an actual injury done to himself, his business is to let me alone; and the same is the case with ten or ten millions.

But besides this, the constitutional and common law view of the case, does any one in his senses suppose that I or any other sincere Christian will be willing and content to trust the authoritative decision of the dearest and most vital points of Christian truth—points to us of such importance that our estimation of their value prevents Christians from being united in one body—to the opinion of a mass of men, full one half of whom have no interest in Christ our Lord, whether by baptism, profession, or any thing else, and the remainder, save our own denomination, are pledged against us by all the ties of sect?

No; controversialists may well be pleased when the “public” applauded, for they know then that so much of an impression is made upon the mass in favor of the opinions they seek to maintain. They may therefore, by a kind of innocent hypocrisy or unconscious deceit, make the public the judge. But in sincerity and truth, the absurdity of taking such a body as a real judge of controversy, is one which no man and no denomination in its senses, at the present day, can be guilty of.

I for one shall be guilty of no such hypocritical conduct. I appeal not to the public. I bow not to its decisions. I belong to that body whose business it is to correct and conquer public opinion, and vanquish majorities—the kingdom of heaven—the one Catholic and Apostolic Church of God—the little leaven that leaveneth the whole lump.

The Bible then is the judge, of course; the fountain of our faith. All Protestant denominations agree in this. Personally the author gives the fullest consent to this truth, and cannot better express his opinion than in the words of one of those articles which, in these days, some belonging to our communion in England, have most dishonestly tried to misinterpret! Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, or may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be counted requisite or necessary to Salvation. Art. 6. This is the opinion of our Church as to the Bible.

Still in the opinions formed upon matters of faith from the Bible by any man or body of men, there are two things which go to make it up, the infallible word of God, and the fallible mind of the individual. Public opinion, therefore, upon the Bible, this I do not count authoritative; this I will not submit to. Nor do I imagine that a Baptist or a Methodist will much disagree with me in this decision.

These then being my opinions as to controversy, I come not before the readers of this book as a controversialist assailing others or defending. And I hope that he who reads this book will find that throughout it, I shall act up to the determination here laid down. For with God's grace no one shall find here any of the jangling, the bitterness, or the malignity of controversy. If the book shall be assailed, I shall make no reply; only this I shall do, read the work of my opponent as carefully and as candidly as I can. And as no man is infallible, if errors in fact or in reasoning are detected, I shall correct them if the book goes on to another

edition. For with controversy, properly so called, I would have nothing to do; of its evils I have the fullest sense; of its uselessness at the present day I am convinced in the fullest manner; and I do conceive that truth ever must be victorious; and with truth upon my side I am content to go on quietly, believing that neither my reputation, nor the cause I support, will perish even if I make no reply to the rejoinders of a hundred exulting antagonists.

I am the further established in this opinion by another consideration, which I shall take the liberty of submitting. One of my strongest objections to controversy has been its negative and combative character. It assails and refutes error, while itself may be in the wrong, upon the very point in debate. For truth is but one, error is manifold. If a man establishes one truth, he destroys a thousand errors in as many different directions. Let him only assail error, he may be just as far wrong himself.

I have, therefore, no sympathy for the assaults of such men as Voltaire upon superstition. I care nothing and give nothing for them. This principle I have acted upon in my ministerial life. I have sought to establish truth, and never assailed error save in this way. I have ever preached what I considered the truth, and left it to combat the error; and thereby I have found great advantage; for all men that are sincere in these days are seeking for the truth; and truth so declared comes without offence, and must ultimately be successful. The same course I shall pursue in this book.

Many persons may think that the course which I have thus marked out for myself to pursue is a very strange and

impracticable one ; nor will this opinion be diminished when they consider that the subject of it, the baptism of infants, is one of those subjects the most controverted at the present day. Yet, perhaps, a statement of my own personal position will in some degree explain this to them.

The author is a priest of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and this from a free and deliberate choice, because he believes her organization to be of divine origin, and her doctrines, her form of worship, her tone of religious feeling, the most in accordance with the bible and the Church in the purest ages. This conviction, taken up as he believes, sincerely and upon due examination, has not decreased in strength, but all reading and all examination has tended to strengthen it, as well as all experience, and all emotions and feelings. He is therefore willing to abide by her standards taken in the plain literal sense, and to take them as *his standards of religious truth*. The reader therefore knows where to find him. The Book of Common Prayer is in the hands of tens of thousands. These are the writer's doctrines, these his opinions, and from them, taken in the plain literal sense, he does not shrink. A position at once free and bound ; freely taken and freely maintained, and yet to which he is bound. Such a thing there is, howsoever the present lovers of unrestrained liberty may deny it ; for armor of iron and steel upon the unwilling is shackles and manacles, while to the willing wearer it is protection and defence.

Now in the Book of Common Prayer there are no less than two offices for the baptism of infants, the author therefore is committed as a Pædobaptist—bound to it. \* In fact,

so clear is the doctrine, and practice, and feeling of Churchmen upon this point, that it would be as great an absurdity to imagine a regular Baptist minister who should preach and practice infant baptism, as a clergyman of the Church who should oppose, or deny, or even doubt the truth and scripturalness of infant baptism. Other denominations may waver, but of the position of these two there is no doubt. Every one that hears that such and such a man is a Baptist, knows at once that he is a person who rejects or denies "infant baptism." Every one too that hears the words "Episcopalian," or "Churchman," at once understands by them a person who is just as firmly decided an advocate of the baptism of babes.

And for myself, as a clergyman, I can declare that in no other office of my ministry do I take so much delight as in the dedication of the unconscious infant to "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." In none else do I feel my faith in the almighty power of the Almighty Father, in the atonement made for all by his eternal Son, and in the sanctifying and all-searching influences of the eternal Spirit, shine out so bright and clear. Such an office has always seemed to me to be one peculiarly blessed, as one of pure faith altogether removed from sight, in which I can trust in him, the Almighty, that he will, in despite of my dim-sightedness, do his own work, which he has granted me the grace to begin.

My position then, both by situation and feelings, is not that of a controversialist or mere arguer. It is the position of one who has the truth and will not abandon it, and cannot. Men may say, "Then are you infallible!" Sneers

are what the consistent supporters of truth always have to encounter; and no one can reply to a sneer. Yet upon this subject there is such a thing as truth; and he that has the truth is more than infallible—he is free. And when I calmly say, that upon this point I have the truth most certainly, I no more say that I am infallible, than I do when I say that I see the light of the sun. The truth is in the bible, and I see it there, just as I see the light in the sun. Again, I see the truth then by “the Church,” “the pillar and ground of the truth.” Just as I see the light by the sense which God in his wisdom has given me, so do I see the truth doctrinally and practically by the Church, the interpreter and guardian of holy writ.

Men of course will deny this, and sneer at it; this I cannot help—I cannot move off the ground I occupy, or combat them on this point. It is one of my positions, one which they must take as an additional reason for my declining controversy.

The author, therefore, of these papers, holding upon the subject of infant baptism clear and determinate views in its favor—holding them also as a vital doctrine of Christianity, and in such a way that he cannot give them up and *will not*, comes forward not as a controversialist to attack others, or to enter into discussion with any champion of the opposite views. This is not his object—his purpose is far different. He wishes to lay clearly and plainly before those who doubt or deny infant baptism, the grounds for his own belief that are to be found in the scripture. To lay it before *them* as persons that have a real and vital interest in it as professing Christians, as persons too that have the bible in their hands,

and are bound to search for the truth there. The author's undertaking, therefore, is to declare the doctrine held by the Church, and himself as a minister of the Church, upon the points; to take the bible then, and show clearly and manifestly, that it contains the same doctrine, and authorizes the same practice. And he implores of those into whose hands this book may come, that they read it fairly and candidly—that they put aside prejudices; and, above all, he desires that they would take the scriptures as they read, in the plain and manifest sense, avoiding as much as may be, the error of the old Pharisees, who made it of no effect, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men, and made the scriptures vain through their tradition. And he implores of the Almighty God, whom he serves, that this small book may be made efficient both to do away prejudice, to soften the strife of sect, and to unite Christians once more in their old profession of one God, one faith, one baptism.





## CHAPTER I.

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### PART I.

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The state of the Question—the importance of it—arising from the Ultra notion of Infant Baptism or Adult Baptism.

HAVING thus stated the grounds upon which I approach the subject, and that in such a manner that I feel full confidence that every lover of the truth who is in pursuit of it, and at the same time is a lover of peace, must be satisfied with them, I shall proceed to enter upon the subject; and let every reader bear in mind, that I come not as a controversialist with argument and debate, to contend for victory with the champions of adult baptism, and upon the issue of such a conflict to place the result, to say to the individual, You see I have brought forward arguments to which your advocates cannot reply, and because of this victory I demand your submission to the standard I uphold, and the opinions I support. This is the position of a controversialist—it is not mine.

I come not as a controversialist, but as a teacher; as one that *has the truth, whose privilege and whose duty it is to teach it.* With this I come to the private

and individual Christian who has the Bible in his hands, and professes to be guided by it; to every one that has an interest in the subject, as father or mother, as brother or sister, to every one that has an interest in innocent and inoffensive babes, I come to that individual as a teacher of the truth, with the bible in my hand, bringing to them as my introduction and support, the testimony of nineteenth-twentieths of Christians at the present day, and forty-five generations of Christians dead and gone to their rest, that the baptism of infants is scriptural; that it is according to the letter, and the tenor, and the spirit of the Gospel, that babes should be baptized.

I come, therefore, backed by this testimony, as one man to his brother, saying, that infant baptism is according to the letter, and the tenor, and the spirit of the scripture, and upon this I ask a hearing of all those who profess to take the scriptures as their guide in doctrine, as most of those do who doubt or deny the doctrine of infant baptism. They cannot refuse me this. No cunning sophism shall they find here; no arguments for victory; no recurrence to matters of history or of antiquity upon which, because they lie out of the tracts of ordinary reading, the private and unlearned Christian may, because of his simplemindedness and confiding faith, be deceived by misrepresentation. The bible shall be the ground of our argument; chapter and verse shall be always given. Let the reader peruse this book with the bible in his hand.

I should, however, at the outset, wish him

clearly to comprehend the object of this book, distinctly to understand that particular point which I advocate. The Baptist at the very outset considers it a wrong and an injury done to his cause, to be called an advocate of adult baptism; because, says he, though in many cases, nay, the majority of cases, the persons whom we baptize are "adults" as a matter of fact; still it is not as "adults" we baptize them, not by any means with respect to age; to say we are advocates of adult baptism therefore, says he, is to do us an injury. Very well. If this be fair I make the same demand of my readers in all fairness and honesty. The tenet I advocate is called "Infant Baptism." "Infancy," we count no qualification for baptism, nor is it because they are "infants" or "babes," that we advocate the baptism of such individuals; it is because we count them suitable, according to the scriptures. Our ground is this: we protest against the mere circumstance of infancy, which involves no sin, being made a disqualification for baptism, and a limitation of the covenant.

Of old there was a dispute as to whether Christ died for all or only for the elect. The doctrines certain persons had taken up, rendered it very necessary for them to assert that Christ had made atonement only for some few. This was a limitation of the atonement established by the tradition or doctrine of man against the plain words of holy scripture. Men who had more confidence in the word of God than in these so called "doctrines," protested against such a limitation; they protested

too in the face of a majority, for they knew that truth was on their side, and will make room for itself amidst overpowering numbers. The advocates for an atonement made for all men have been successful, the advocates for a limited atonement are in a miserable minority. Now the same is the position of the author of this book—the same shall be the result. Certain persons would limit baptism, the seal of the Christian covenant, to believers only, they say. But when we come to find what this word “believers” means, it not only implies the belief of the parties, it implies something more; that they can declare their faith by speech, or something tantamount to speech. They in effect say we shall permit none to be baptized but those who believe and *can speak upon the matter*. This is the reason why they exclude babes from the covenant. Babes cannot talk, they are “infants.”

Now, reader, here is my position; I come forward not in respect to age as an advocate of Infant Baptism, but I come forward to protest against a limitation of the covenant, a denial of baptism, its seal, to any class, because of a circumstance not spiritual but strictly corporeal. To uphold the opinion that no circumstance, merely personal, such as this is, of talking or not talking, for this it amounts to, should so limit the covenant as to deny baptism, the seal of it, to those for whom Christ died, who have immortal souls, and are pure and clean from the stain of actual sin. This is my position. I take my stand upon the great truth, that “God is no respecter of persons;” I

uphold the truth, that no circumstances merely personal, as infancy, or youth, or age, speaking or not speaking, are disqualifications for an alliance between the pure and ever-living spirit and the all-pure Father of spirits.

And this question of the limitation of the seal of God's covenant, I do not count to be any indifferent or unimportant matter. The question of the exclusion or the admittance to such a privilege, as is that of membership in the Church of God, is manifestly a most deeply important one. The more so, that if a wrong and injury be done to those who are thus excluded, it is a wrong inflicted upon those who cannot resist it, and are unconscious of the injury inflicted, and yet must suffer by it; a wrong done to those whom all men call innocent, and all love and pity.

However, let us dwell for a moment upon this consideration. There are manifestly but two sides to the question:—"the baptism of infants according to the letter, the tenor, and the spirit of the Gospel," this is the one side; or, "the baptism of infants contrary to the letter, the tenor, and the spirit of the Gospel;" this is the other side. Both these cannot be true; one must be true and the other false. This must be the case, no matter how many are on the one side or on the other; there is no alternative, no indifference, no third point. This must be the conclusion of every reasoning man and woman.

This is manifestly the alternative between fixed Pædobaptists, as Churchmen are by their profes-

sion, and fixed Anti-pædobaptists, as they are who deny infant baptism, and make that denial a term of communion. He that affirms the one must deny the other. It would be folly to take either of these parties, not to be wholly and entirely in earnest upon the matter. It would be the greatest insult and injury to impute to them indifference or carelessness upon the point. By their position and by their official acts, neither party is indifferent, each is willing to accept of the alternative, to affirm it and its consequences.

I myself as a Churchman am not indifferent in the slightest degree, nor do I wish to treat the matter as an indifferent one. I consider it as a question of the very highest importance, a vital and fundamental question. I believe it one upon which one day or another all parties must and will agree; and its decision I look upon as the great means towards the bringing of all that profess Christianity once more towards the natural condition of Christianity, the condition of our Church, having "one God, one faith, one baptism." Nor do I care for indifferent readers; they who see the alternative to be as it is stated above, that "infant baptism, according to the scriptures, must be either true or false," and who having an interest in the rising generation, as all men have, do not, as all right-minded and warm-hearted men ought to do, feel that interest to be a vital and important one, and therefore will not see the importance of this question, and count it a matter indifferent, they have my full consent to drop the book and read no

further on in it; for I feel that the question is truly whether Christianity shall be brought in contact with the family, whether it shall be an element of life in all ages, and a motive and principle of action to all persons, or only to those who can speak. The question is truly, shall it be a thing of the family, or shall it be excluded from it, and be a matter of the Church only? The cold-hearted, and the selfish, and the short-sighted, only can be indifferent upon this question. Such readers I care not for.

Now, with regard to those who are thoroughly in earnest upon the question of infant baptism; with regard, too, to those who take a real interest in the family, and considering it as the very foundation of society, think that nothing is unimportant that touches it; to them I wish to present the consequences of this alternative. I accept them myself, and am certain that the fixed and honest Baptist is willing to do the same, though neither of course will make them matters of personal offence to our neighbours; both in this matter are willing to be guided in the conduct of daily life towards our neighbours, by the influence of charity.

Now let us look to the consequences of the alternative. If infant baptism be contradictory to the letter, the tenor, and the spirit of the Gospel, what is it in itself or in its effects? what must we consider it to be? The answer is, "It is and must be the most grievous of all the corruptions of Christianity—a perversion of the covenant—a mockery of our Lord Jesus by the introduction

into his covenant of those who are by his word forbidden so to be introduced, and who are unfitted for it by the principles of the Gospel, who never may have faith in him, and yet are members of his Church." Such, as regards God, is the act of the man who baptizes infants, if such baptism be unscriptural. This is the estimate of the action that we are compelled to make if the supposition be true. But "God not being mocked," it is in that case "no baptism at all"—perfectly invalid. The effect of the act, therefore, as regards the persons baptized, is to delude the parents with the pretence that their children are in covenant with God, under His protecting guardianship, and the peculiar objects of the influences of the Holy Spirit, when they are not in covenant with him, more than any other children when they are not influenced by the Spirit any more than any others. It is to propagate this delusion, to persuade them as they grow up to act as members of "Christ's body, his flesh, and his bones," when they are aliens from the household of God, and the commonwealth of Israel. If, therefore, the Baptists' notion that infant baptism is unscriptural be true, such an act on the part of the baptized is, when we consider it in respect of God, a mockery and a blasphemy; in respect of man, a delusion involving very pernicious consequences.

Let us do as we may, if infant baptism be contrary to the letter, the tenor, and the spirit of the scriptures, such is and must be its nature. Christians may, and of course will, in the spirit of



Christian charity, make all allowances for prejudices, mistakes, and errors, on the part of men who are fallible. Of course, they will give all credit for sincerity and for right motives, perverted and misdirected by outward circumstances. But still these change not the nature of the act; if it be wrong it must be what we have said.

I do not blame our Baptist friends for holding such opinions; their action at least is consistent, and in accordance with their principles, and must be right if infant baptism be unscriptural. I seek, therefore, to make no capital from this fact against them; to rouse no prejudice, to make no advantage of it. They at least are honest and bold, and unflinching in their honesty, qualities not to be despised in this day of indifference and carelessness. And I feel not uneasy about their opinions, seeing that along with me, they must condemn the best majority of Christians both now and at all times previous.

Let us now look at the other side. If infant baptism, as the majority of professing Christians who are Pædobaptists believe, be according to the letter, the tenor, and the spirit of the Gospel of our most blessed Lord, what is the practice of the Baptist sects? If it be in accordance with the Gospel, that the babe should be a member of his Church, manifestly then to exclude them from it, must be a cruelty of the worst kind, as done to innocent babes, who are unconscious of the wrong and cannot resist it, yet must suffer by it. If there be any benefits to those who are within the covenant

more than to those without it, from the Almighty Father, whose providence rules all events for the good of them that love him; from the Son who has died for the unspeaking babe as well as the adult; from the eternal and all-pervading Spirit; it is to deprive them of all these unjustly and cruelly, and at a period when they most need it, to cut off from the babe, the child, and the growing youth, influences which, though unseen, the eye of faith views as most precious. If grace, the oil of the Spirit, is promised at baptism, and conferred upon those in covenant with God's Church, it is cruelty to cut him off from the grace of God. To forbid the little child to come unto him and thus to deserve the rebuke, and the displeasure of our Lord. If there be only two states in this world, the state of covenant with God, and the state of unregenerate human nature, it is to shut the infant out from the covenant, to leave him to all influences of unregenerate human nature; to keep him in the world, when he might be in the Church; and to leave him to the prince of the world, when he might be a subject of Christ, guarded and guided by his covenant; more than this, it is to put a great gulf between the Christian parent and the child; herself a Christian, to compel her to know that whatsoever claim herself may have on the undeserved mercy of God, her child has not and cannot be taught the facts and truths of the Gospel, as one that has a right in them, but must be instructed in Christianity, as a mere historical thing, thus cutting away all possibility of a true Christian education, and

taking away from the infant, and the growing boy, and the youth, Christianity, as a law of life, and a motive and principle of action. They who consider infant baptism to be just and scriptural, must by that very fact hold these opinions, as to the effect of a systematic denial and opposition to the baptism of infants; they must think it to be unjust and cruel in the highest degree, and attended with the most pernicious consequences.

Surely a doctrine, the truth or falsehood of which necessitates such opinions upon the part of professing Christians, with regard to one another, must, in the course of time, be decided one way or the other. Surely men that have the bible in their hands, must at some time, come to an unanimous decision upon a point which forces them to believe the practice of their neighbors, who have faith in the same God, read the same scriptures, are saved by the same Redeemer, to be of such a character. It would be an injustice to the Almighty to suppose that it will be always so. We must by the very fact, that "God is love," and love is the fulfilling of the law, be, in the course of his providence, all Baptists, or else all Pædobaptists.

I make no apology to my readers for introducing my subject in this way to them; nor do I fear offending even the most firm and determined Baptist, who may peruse this book by it. They see there is an alternative, of which we must take the one side or the other—baptism of infants is according to the scriptures, or opposed to them. And which ever side be true, the other has necessarily

the character I have given it. Such an alternative need give no offence; it is one of position, and which cannot be avoided, but must be taken; it is one which shows the importance of the question, the absolute necessity for deciding it in the one way or the other—and by the bible we shall decide it.

## CHAPTER II.

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### PART I.

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How the Bible is to be argued upon in this matter.

IN my last I stated the position, that in arguing for infant baptism I did not argue as if that age were a qualification, but that I took the broad ground, that *it is no disqualification*; that age, or sex, or any circumstances whatsoever, that do not stain the soul with actual sin, cannot be a bar to the mercies of God; that I here protest against the limitation of God's covenant by man's notions.

I stated too, the importance of the question in such a way that each fair and candid individual must think that if I am wrong, I have been as severe upon the consequences of my error as upon those of the other side; and finally, I declared that to the bible I should appeal, and decide the question by it.

Now let the laity remember that I am writing for them; let them remember that it is to the bible I appeal, and not as a controversialist; let them consider that they have not the books of Christian archæology; that the most of Christian writers of the last ages are shut up in tomes of Greek and

Latin, and yet they have the bible in their hands ; I ask them then to think how we shall take the bible ; seriously and solemnly I ask them, before entering upon the question, to think how the bible should be taken.

Let them bear in mind, first, the position that I have taken ; a position so different from that of the ordinary writers ; the position of a teacher that has the truth. Let them then think upon their own position ; that of men who seek the truth and are in earnest about it ; for I hope the remarks I have made in the previous chapter will have caused all vain and inquisitive persons with itching ears, to have laid the book aside before they come so far as this. I hope that all who peruse this page are in earnest, and see the deep and solemn importance of the alternative which, on the one side, implies mockery of the Almighty ; on the other, spiritual cruelty of the most pernicious kind. This mutual position then of the writer and of his readers, implies a temper in both him and them, which is in a great measure unknown to books upon this point, and readers of these books. Now to show what temper that is, let us just see how men argue. Romanists assert that infant baptism cannot be proved from the scripture, though some of their eminent authors consider it can, when it suits their purpose. They, therefore, are out of our way ; we have nothing to do with them. We are Protestants. We have taken at the beginning of this treatise the Protestant ground, that nothing is an article of faith but that can be proved from the scriptures.

Now the dispute on infant baptism is between Protestants. The Baptists on the one side, as fixed and determined in practice as well as doctrine, consistent Anabaptists; and on the other, the Pædobaptists, at whose head, as perfectly consistent both in doctrine and practice, we have put the Church. Now we ask of sober-minded and thoughtful men and women, to look at the way in which this argument has been hitherto carried on. The bible, we will remark, is the common ground both profess to go upon. The Baptist brings up a text which he thinks to prohibit infant baptism; he urges it, goes upon it, takes his stand upon it, as ground firm and sure, that cannot be cut away. The Pædobaptist comes again, he takes the same text, he shows again that there is no strength in it; that the interpretation is wrong. Again, the Baptist replies; the reply is followed by a rejoinder; pages are written, and books, all to prove or disprove. Now these books are for the laity, to be read by them. Is this the taking the bible as our ground? I ask the fair common sense Christian, is it so? No: certainly it is not. The proof is not the text at all; for it requires to be proved that it means so and so. Men, of whose learning, ability, and honesty, we have enough evidence, assert the one side and assert the other. What is the proof then? Why, it is the correctness of their own reasonings, the quantity of Greek criticism brought out in their pages, and supported by great names, of whom the ordinary Christian has but seldom heard. The opinion of this great man and the

other great man; history, which one in a thousand knows nothing about, and the antiquities of eighteen centuries, as much as can be put in twenty pages. Assertion, denial, argumentation, history, criticism, archæology, nine-tenths of the matter written upon the one side and the other, is clearly out of the tract of ordinary Christian men and women. Prove baptism by the bible, when the bible texts themselves, upon which they rely, are themselves to be proved by a quantity of learned matter, which is so far out of the way of ordinary men, as the Mahabarater of the sanscrit poet, or the Shuchmanch of Fredusi! Really and truly, considering the ground we Protestants profess to take, it has been hitherto kept to but ill! The argument hitherto has not been the bible, but the learning, research, and argument, of Dr. G. and Dr. T.; very good indeed when you have taken decisively one side or the other, and believe and have full confidence *in them, and their truth and candor*; good then, for confirmation of your belief, but no good at all in deciding, and not by any means deserving the name of arguments founded upon the bible. Let the Baptist or Pædobaptist, who is no scholar, take his books, those he most trusts upon, and he will see that his so called bible proof is none at all, being itself proved by other proofs of which, by his position, he cannot know whether they are true or false, and does most surely know that they are denied by a multitude. The so called "bible arguments," are no such thing at all.



The sense and feeling of this fact is what has driven the author to write this book. He has felt that the religious faith of man, the undying, is not a thing to be thus played upon; not a pair of scales to go in this manner, see-sawing between pro and con. He feels that one side is true, and a thousand learned doctors, and a thousand cart loads of learning, cannot weigh it down. He knows it is true according to the bible, and therefore he will not argue in a way which talks of the bible, and virtually puts the bible out of place, and puts in learning, research, the argument of men, instead of the holy word of God. He writes for the unlearned and the ordinary Christian; he does not then bring in learning, and learned arguments, of which they can be no judges. He writes as a *teacher that has the truth*, and not as a lawyer employed in defending a cause, right be it or wrong. Every thing he says, every statement he makes, the ordinary and unlearned Christian shall be able to judge of, whether it is true or false, and form his opinions accordingly; no need shall he have of Greek, or Hebrew, or Latin, or metaphysics, or the knowledge of a multitude of books, to decide upon it. This is the way of one who believes his doctrine to be in the bible, and to be capable of being proved from it—this and not the other.

How then shall we take the bible—for evidently there are two ways of taking it; one we have pointed out above. In this way we shall not take it; others may bring in nice interpretation, and subtle special pleading, by which to evade the

plain sense of the words that lie upon the surface. They may then wrestle and try in controversy, and search through all the rubbish of past ages, for supports to prop them up. We shall not do so; we shall take the scripture as it lies, in the plain manifest sense in which any man of piety and ordinary good sense must be forced to take the words, if unprejudiced. And we demand of the sober-minded, that when we bring forward passages of the scripture in this sense, that they take the word of God as it reads and as it means; that they cast away the false interpretations of sect and party, and take the word of God as it stands.

We take the liberty of dwelling upon this point a little; of solemnly urging it upon the hearts and consciences of our readers; for barely to have the bible in our hands and in our mouths is not enough, if we do not act in this way. The Pharisees of old had the bible, and sincerely professed to go by it, but they had their subtilities, their distinctions, their sect-interpretations; and these they taught—their laity believed them. These did away the force of the scriptures; as it is said, “they taught for traditions the doctrines of men;” and again, “ye have made the commandment of God of none effect by your traditions;” that is, by subtle interpretations, handed down from one to the other, which did away the plain force of the scriptures. And he, the Teacher whom we follow, the Master that has commissioned us to teach, he came not to them in their own way of argumentation and debate. No: he was a teacher and not a controver-

sialist. He placed first the word of God, and side by side with it, the tradition which did it away. "God commanded, honor thy father and mother, and he that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, whosoever shall say to his father or mother, it is (corban) a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; and honor not his father or his mother, he shall be free." (Matt. xv. 4—6.) No refutation here of the arguments by which the sect-interpretation was proved, and they are many and plausible; but one placed side by side with the other, and the decision left to the truth that lies in the heart of man. So when the Romanists had declared that images might be worshipped and bowed down to, because of certain subtle interpretations, needless here to mention, the true refutation is juxta-position of them with the plain words of scripture, "thou shalt not make to thyself a graven image—thou shalt not bow down to them nor worship them."

The controversialist refutes. The teacher says, "here is the word of God in its plain sense; here the interpretation which does it away; if you take the word of man instead of the word of God, you do it at your peril—I am free."

Now this is not of those days only, but now it is the curse of a sect-rent Christianity. Good men and pious men in centuries gone by, have organized sects; the practices they enjoined have necessitated interpretations according with these practices. These are handed down from one generation to another; they have with men the force of scripture,

while they do away the scripture; yea, its plain words and manifest sense. Upon this we stand as Churchmen, as will be after seen in the course of this practice; upon this the author stands in this book. He brings the words of scripture, and side by side with them the tradition. He neither argues nor refutes, but takes the plain sense. This is the way in which we take the bible; a fair and just way, as every one can see—the only way in which men can come to a conclusion. If any one, therefore, denies the conclusions we come to, he need not look far for the reason. He will find some passage or other previously adduced, some plain text of the scripture, which, because of his sect-prejudices, of his previous teaching, he was unwilling to take in its manifest sense—the sense in which it reads. Upon his own head be the responsibility then; he and his notions shall pass away, but “the word of the Lord endureth for ever.”

Of course men will say, “if you act thus you will have but small success; you will be refuted, argued against, disproved, put down by jeers, and slightly valued.” We are content to be so—such was our Master. But still with God’s word in its plain sense upon our side, and the truth, and a heart and soul that feels the truth and its work, we do not care for these things. We enter upon a new course upon this subject, a course different from the old; and we believe in man, in his desire after the truth, in all things. We bring the truth here, and a most vital one, which we deeply realize ourselves, and in the way that we think the best,

and we feel that some at least must realize it ; and though no renown may follow this book, still we shall have our reward, and that in the way we desire. If because of this book a father shall take his children upon his knee, and feeling that they are by holy baptism made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, shall do his duty by them as a Christian father, a priest in his own house, in leading them onward in the path of obedience to God and duty ; training them in God's word, and in his ways, as members of the covenant to whom the promise is ; instead of leaving them, as I have seen pious men do, to be converted when adults ; and in the mean time to be guided by all influence of chance and time ; and this because there was no bond of duty, such as infant baptism establishes ; if because of this book one mother can embrace her children, and feel that they are not her flesh and her blood only, but baptized into his body, by whom she is saved, " members of his body, his flesh, and his bones," and thereby do her duty to them, as women will do, when they feel it, and as but few do it at the present day, outside the Church ; if one family, by means of this book, can come to be *wholly* consecrated to God, instead of belonging half to God, and half to the world, the flesh and the devil, (for surely the unconverted belong not to God,) so that an household shall become, because of it, a temple wholly consecrated and dedicated to Him ; then may the author leave aside all concern for controversial renown or controversial assaults, " for great shall be his reward in heaven."

## CHAPTER III.

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### PART I.

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In what shape shall we put the question?

HAVING thus stated that we shall go to the bible for an answer to this question, and how we shall go, we proceed onward to the next matter to be decided. In consulting the bible upon the matter, what is the shape in which we shall put the question? The Baptist says, bring us a command to baptize infants. That we shall not do—we baptize them not in respect of age, more than in respect of the same they profess to baptize adults. The unfairness they complain of in being called advocates of adult baptism, we shall not permit them to put upon us. We baptize them because they are immortal souls, for whom Christ, our most blessed Redeemer died, in whom there is no speck or spot of actual sin, and whom therefore we count most worthy of the covenant of God, and of its seal. To expect that our Lord Jesus, in promulgating his covenant, would make mention of infancy or adult years; would speak of the baptism of boys, or girls, or virgins, or married men, or married

women, or widows—this would be an absurdity. The physical and the personal has nothing at all to do with the spiritual covenant.

But the absurdity of such a demand is more fully shown by the question I would put to a Baptist, Would not you baptize an infant if you knew he had faith? Of course he would. Why talk thus then against infant baptism as such? And pray is this impossible? He, who, a babe in his mothers's womb, leaped for joy at the presence of her who bore unborn his Saviour, how could he rejoice in him without believing. (See upon this Dr. Woods on Baptism.) The same infant that was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, how could he be so sanctified, not having faith?

The conclusion, therefore, I would come to, is a plain one; it is an absurdity to make a physical and corporeal matter a qualification or disqualification for a spiritual covenant; a still greater absurdity to demand from others such a command. We say that they are fit for the above reason, that God is no respecter of persons; that age, or youth, or sex, or condition, are nought to him if the qualifications be there. And they make this purely a personal thing, a disqualification; and call upon us to show that a personal thing, as this is, is a qualification. Such a matter, we say, as being nothing in God's sight, cannot be a disqualification; as being nothing in his sight, it cannot, and is not mentioned as a qualification. The true mode for those who make infancy a disqualification, or non-talking, for this is the amount of it, they being

absolutely certain that infants or babes do not talk, and not absolutely certain that they do not believe, is to show that God bids these stainless souls, whom his Son redeemed, to be excluded from his covenant, because they are infants—because they cannot talk! Let them go candidly to work; let them say, although infants may be sanctified and filled with the Holy Ghost; and although St. Peter makes such an influence of the Holy Ghost a qualification for baptism—“Who can forbid water, that these be baptized who have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we”—still, nevertheless, we count that the mere physical fact of infancy is a disqualification—we forbid infants because they are such—as they do—and then let them show chapter and verse for it. This would be the fair bible way—the whole bible way. We take not the opinion or knowledge of man as on a par with the holy word of God.

But, again, there is another reason in the nature of the thing. The commission to baptize is confessedly the most important text upon the subject. In it we should expect to find directions; in it, if there were any class excluded for other than spiritual qualifications, a mention would be made of the class, and yet behold the command is general: “Go ye therefore, and teach, (make disciples of,) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”\*

\* The first Baptists saw the importance of establishing a limitation from the command and commission. And being ignorant and unlearned, they thought they had it in the word “teach”—how could they be



The text then implies no limitation in itself, save this, that they in all nations, who were capable of the ordinance, and were capable of being disciples of Christ, should be baptized. The command is general. The mass of Christians have ever taken it so. They that forbid infants to be baptized because they are infants, their business it is to bring a limitation, to show that as they forbid "infants," so do the scriptures forbid them. This would at once settle the point. But Baptists are not very hasty in entering upon this point; they prefer making violent calls upon their opponents for a command from scripture; quite forgetful that a command to baptize all, embraces a command to baptize infants, except an exception of them be expressly made. Such a limitation they cannot produce—such a prohibition. They are, therefore, very ready to stick it out and abide upon the other ground.

We, however, as not wrestling or tugging in controversy with Baptist books, shall begin in this way, and we fear not that the judicious and sober-minded whom we address, will be content with it. The first question, therefore, we shall put, is this, Is infant baptism forbidden in the scriptures?

We have given reasons enough why this should be the first question for him who seriously desires to examine into the scriptures; which is quite a

taught except they could speak, i. e. they could not be infants. *μαθηται* is to learn; from it, comes *μαθητης*, a disciple; from it again *μαθητευω*, to make disciples, the word in our text.

different thing, and implies a different temper from that which seeks proof and desires to support an opinion by the scriptures. Now shall we give some additional reason from the position of the parties in the debate. Every one who knows any thing of the Christian world, is well aware that nineteenth-twentieths of those who profess the faith of Christ, and rest their salvation upon his name, are against the limitation of his covenant and its seal, by the circumstance of age, and consequently baptize infants. A small proportion only are Baptists, holding infancy to be a disqualification. Here, then, is a vast majority of Christians at the present day professing to be saved by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and among them there certainly is as much consistency to their profession, and as much fruits of faith, as there is amongst the Baptists, whether we count that mixed multitude of sects who have but little claim to unity, whether of doctrine or practice, save in the common fact of denying baptism to infants, and baptizing by plunging under the water, or take only the smaller body, called regular Baptists; in either case, the rest of the Christian world are to them at the least twenty to one. Now are all these men—so vast a majority, all with the bible in their hands—all professing to be saved by Christ only—all worshipping him as their Saviour—are they all in the wrong? Surely “they are all in the wrong—they baptize infants.” “Pædobaptism is the most grievous corruption ever brought into Christianity—a corruption which invalidates all Christianity, and destroys—so *all these*

*are not Christians, nor do we who are Christians, in any way recognize them as such."*

But again, not only is there a majority now, but for three hundred years, that is, for nine generations, back to the time of the reformation, the majority has been as great—have these all been under error in the point? Surely so, say the consistent Baptists. And then from the reformation up to the time of Origen, during which period, by the confession of Baptist writers themselves, the whole Church unanimously and universally baptized infants. During all which times, however, there might have been two or three scattering heretics here and there, who held the Baptist notion—these were confessedly no Baptist organization, or as they call it, a church. During this period of 1350 years, or forty-five generations, was the whole Church in error upon this point, practicing "a grievous corruption, which invalidates all Christian ordinances, and disqualifies for the name of Christian?" Surely the consistent Baptists say it was.

It is a very hard thing to believe, for any Christian man who believes that Christ has promised to be with his disciples to the end of the world; harder still for one who considers Christianity and the Church as a power struggling in the world, ever seeming to be conquered, yet ever overcoming; combating the world through all ages in its various forms, from the rude barbarian of Attila and Genseric, with their devouring hosts, downward through the devouring violence and brute force of middle

age feudalism; hard it is to believe all these holy and self-denying men, whom we know through all this stream of ages, to have stood up like men for God and his word, against the fierce and bloody tyrants of the earth, and all in the name of Christ, *our Lord and theirs*—that all these were no Christians, unworthy of the communion of Christ's body and blood, because they baptized infants!

Supposing now that the Baptist doctrine is true—granting too, as they will grant, that they have such a mass against them of those who profess to believe in Christ, to be saved by faith in his name, and in the bible to find their doctrine, what is their proper position? They are *reformers*, a body of reformers fighting against a vast majority who have adopted and do support “an erroneous abuse,” “one of the most grievous corruptions of Christianity.” The position then, which they take, essentially both by their numbers, as so small compared with the mass, and also by the zeal with which they assail the others, is the position of reformers who protest against an erroneous positive abuse. But more than this, it is reformers who have the same code of laws of life to appeal to, the very same book, in the same words, as they have who receive that so called abuse. And to both parties that book stands in the same position. What then is their ground as reformers? surely that of denying the abuse, of showing it to be forbidden. If they are in the right, this would be the position they would most naturally take, to show that in the scriptures infant baptism *is forbidden*. Such a de-

monstration would be at once the firmest and the best support of their principles. Such I have before shown was the position our blessed Lord took with regard to the Pharisees and their corruptions. Such the position the reformers took toward Rome. Here is the abuse they said, for instance, of worshipping images—they minded not the subtle distinctions of *Latria* and *Dulia*—and here is the command, “Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, or the likeness of any thing in heaven above, or the earth beneath, or the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them.” Such must be always the position of religious reformers; the position of showing that which they deem a corruption to be plainly forbidden in the scriptures, a position the Baptists are not very fond of taking; however, we shall take it. We shall make the first question to be the investigation, as to whether the baptism of infants, which they charge as so weighty an abuse, is forbidden by the word of God. It is, as we have shown, the most natural way of proceeding; a way, which, when it is clearly made out and decided, gets us free from an immensity of vagueness and ambiguity, and enables the plain man who has only the bible in his hand, to go on clearly and tranquilly to the further examination of the question.

The conduct of the Baptists towards the rest of Christendom, as well as their assumed position of reformers, protesting against an erroneous abuse which is positive and injunctive, warrants this

mode of proceeding. Their first step ought to be to show, if they can, that the scripture forbids the practice which they disclaim against so forcibly. If they cannot show this to be so, most likely they are innovators instead of being reformers.

Their bearing towards the rest of Christians strengthens this, and will warrant the demand in the mind of every reasonable Christian. The fact that they, a small minority in this age, and in every age by-gone, by cutting off all the rest of Christendom from communion, and denying their baptism, deny them to be Christians, this is a motive for the same line of proceeding. The others thus excluded may say, "We believe in the same God—we read the same bible—we are saved by faith in the same Redeemer—we show as much of the fruits and proof of faith as is seen among you—and yet you deny us to be Christians. Why is this?" Surely this is a fair question, one which the hearts of all men tell them must be answered. And what is the answer—"There is among you a great and erroneous corruption, the very cancer that eats into the heart of Christianity—the baptism of infants." May not the others then make this fair request, and should it not be gratified—"Show us then, that the baptism of infants is what you say it is, by the scriptures—show it to be what you assert it to be by the bible—do with us as regards our corruptions, as our Lord did with the Pharisees, as the reformers did by the Romish Church—let us have the plain words of scripture, forbidding the doctrine and the practice. This is the proceed-

ing your position and your assertions render necessary. This, then, we have a right to demand." There is no man we believe, not even the most inveterate enemy of infant baptism, can deny the justice of such a demand, especially when he considers the importance of the question, and the relative position of the parties in the case.

The next question, therefore, is this—Is infant baptism forbidden in the scriptures?

## CHAPTER IV.

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### PART I.

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Is the Baptism of Infants forbidden ?

WE come then to the question, Is infant baptism forbidden in the scriptures? And upon this I take my stand. In the name of the huge majority of Pædobaptists who are upon the earth at the present day, in the name of fifty generations of Christians now dead and gone to their rest, who both held and practiced infant baptism, I ask for the proof that our practice is unscriptural, I ask for the passage that forbids the baptism of infants.

Let us come to the proof. It "is a corruption in the Church," say the Baptists, "the most grievous and unscriptural of all corruptions." Their practice is in accordance with their sentiment; they virtually declare that there are no other Christians than themselves; they have no communion with others; as far as lies in them, they excommunicate all others. Surely one would say, the *bible must forbid* this sin. The bible was hidden from all Christians for fifteen hundred years; the printing press was not in existence; the clergy



kept the word of God to themselves, and for their private gain, baptized infants.

The bible has been in the hands of *all* Christian denominations now, by their own acknowledgment, unrestrainedly, for three hundred and fifty years, and nineteen-twentieths of them are not Baptists. This does not look very like the baptism of infants being forbidden by the bible.

It is not forbidden ; if it be, let us have chapter and verse. Not a verse is there, not a line, not a word, that forbids it, in the course of the whole New Testament, from the first chapter of St. Matthew to the last of the Apocalypse. How strange a thing this is, if it be “the most erroneous corruption of the Gospel ever introduced into Christianity ;” that from Christ our Lord, ever-blessed, and from his holy apostles, there should come no warning against it, no prophetic prohibition of it, no declaration of its danger, no caution against it. Surely, the very fact, that infant baptism has been so extended, so universal—this, if it were a corruption, would render such a warning needful, upon the principles of the Gospel ; and yet, in the whole of the New Testament, there is no such thing, not a word forbidding it ; through the whole New Testament there is not a single text that says, “ye shall not baptize infants.” How strange a thing this is, and how inconsistent with the scheme of revelation, if the Baptist doctrine, and their opinion as to infant baptism, be correct.

Again, if infant baptism be such a thing as they say it is, so great a corruption, can the common

sense Christian imagine that the commission would be left as it is, general, "Go ye, teach, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?" Surely if the baptism of infants were so great a corruption, here would have been the place for the exception to have been made, "except infants," and the cause for that exception in some such words as the Baptists now stigmatize it with—"for this is a sin and a corruption." But here, where most naturally we should have expected some such thing, it being an absurdity to suppose a commission given by our Lord not clear and distinct, and in itself having a snare and a pitfall to sin, there is no such thing; nay, through the whole of the scriptures, there is no text that prohibits the baptism of babes in express words.

The amount of the whole matter then is, that it is not forbidden in the scriptures. I take my stand upon this—I say to my readers, that not a passage can be produced from the one end of the New Testament to the other, that prohibits the baptism of infants; nay, not a line from which the inference can be drawn, that they, having immortal souls, for which Christ died, and being without spot or speck of actual sin, are incapable of being in covenant with the Father of spirits, and being signed with the seal of that covenant.

This is the plain common sense view of the case, which every one, with his bible in his hand, can see to be true. And standing upon this, I ask men seriously, how they, professing to be Chris-

tians, can reject and cast away from his covenant, those whom he has not forbidden.

Yes; but does he command? Yes, *he does command*, for the command embraces them in the word "all." You say they are the exception; you cannot establish that exception, asserted by yourselves only, and not by him, for you cannot bring forward the text that says they are forbidden.

How then do they arrive at that conclusion, taking, as they do, like all Protestant denominations, the scripture as their rule of faith and practice? They must acknowledge they find no express prohibition, no command that says, "thou shalt not baptize infants." Not being direct, it must be by inference.

Inference is of two kinds, verbal and doctrinal. We assert, that neither verbally or doctrinally, is there any inference that prohibits infant baptism. Let our readers look to this, and they will see the inference is the other way. The Christian life is an inference, a realization of the spirit of the scripture in action: nineteen-twentieths of them are baptizers of infants. Here is the inference: the spirit of the scriptures in action, is it against Pædobaptism? No, certainly, it is for it: of the millions of those who baptized their children in infancy, and read God's holy word, upon how few has the notion of its being wrong ever remotely come?

But the inference is the other way. The direct command, enjoining the baptism of infants among other classes, for so it does, since the exception which the Baptists make, is not made in the scrip-

tures, but *solely made by themselves*. The inferences are all in accordance with that direct command, instead of against it. We ask the plain common sense Christian to consider with us one of these, before we end this chapter.

“And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those who brought them. But Jesus, when he saw it, was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.” (Mark x. 13; Matt. xix. 14.)

Now let us remark upon this passage. Here the parents, we may suppose, bring their infants to Christ—young children, it is expressly said, wherefore this? Because they were pure and innocent; because too, before this time, Christ had taken a child and placed him in the midst of his disciples, as a warning; because they knew too that virtues had gone out of him, and undoubtedly had reason to believe, that the blessing and the touch of such a man, who was both God and man, must be of no unimportant service to the future life of their children.

“His disciples rebuked them.” And wherefore should they rebuke them? Let the reader think why. Surely it must have been because of their infancy; for looking at Christ as a teacher and

their teacher, how could unspeaking babes become disciples with them ; how could they have faith in him ; how could they repent ? They could not speak at all, and therefore the disciples judged that they could not be disciples. Again : after being blessed by him, who knew but that they would disgrace that blessing ? Again : of what service could it be, that he should touch them ? The mind of infants could not be conscious of that blessing which should be given, and what *spiritual* good could come to the souls of them by a touch.

“ And, therefore, they rebuked them.” Faith they had in that which he told them, because of his wondrous works—faith in the act proposed they could not have without evidence, and no evidence they had seen. They rebuked those fathers and mothers in whom their human nature spoke, and believed in Christ. They spoke harshly and severely, and were for forbidding them. They, believers in Christ, could not consider the instructive yearning of nature here to be aught but folly, such folly as merited a rebuke.

“ And then he was much displeased.” The anger of a man and his just displeasure, is a thing truly to be afraid of and grieved at ; but here is the displeasure of him who was both God and man ; as God, without wrath, save at sin and evil ; as man, pure from sin, and then far from sinful anger ; free from wrath, at evil inflicted upon himself, and meek in bearing suffering without anger, however great his sorrow might be.

“ And he was much displeased.” Surely be-

cause they had sinned, because presumptuously trusting upon their own reasonings, they had striven to keep away from him the helpless and the undefiled, and had repressed the voice and instinct of nature in the parent's heart, crying after a blessing for their children.

“And he said, Suffer little children to come unto me.” From this we see little children then could come to him. Can they not come now? Is there any thing in the state of a babe born of the race of Adam different now from what it was then? Is there any thing in Christ now, “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,” different from what there was then?

“Forbid them not.” Man then could forbid them. The way in which Christ enjoined that they should suffer them to come, this way might by men, and his own disciples too, be blocked up against them, and they forbidden by them.

“Of such is the kingdom of God.” The kingdom of God is the “Church on earth and in heaven.” Here is a qualification, Christ died for them, they had immortal souls, they were free from actual guilt. Christian, thou who believest in the atonement of sins through faith in Christ after repentance, is not this the state in which thou professest to be—this state of a little child? and is it not because of this, that thou comest forward? if this were not thy state, wouldest thou come to his holy baptism? Look then at the following verse.

“Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.”

Here it is most plainly laid out to be so. The word "as," manifestly implying situation and character, and not merely docility. In the other Gospel, where this passage is cited, "of such is the kingdom of heaven," evidently "such" in qualities.

"And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands upon them, and blessed them." Took up infants who were unconscious, and knew not therefore of it; laid his hands upon them; upon the flesh of these babes, the Master of spirits, our spiritual Teacher, laid the hands of his sinless humanity, his hands of human flesh as our's, but hands untainted with the fires and pollution of sin, and blessed them; words of benediction, which their ears heard yet did not understand, and what did not convey any mental emotion to the undeveloped soul; what benefit could these be to them?

Ecclesiastical history tells us, that in after years, before the justest and the greatest of the Roman persecuting emperors, there stood a poor and aged man, a holy bishop of the Church, bearing testimony to the first of the Christians' maxims, with his incarnate Lord. And how the pagan scoffed at the notion, that a living man could bear within him the crucified. And that Ignatius said, "I am Ignatius called Theophoros." (God-bearing and God-borne, the word has both these meanings.) The first he brought forth in his answer to Trajan; for the second, ecclesiastical history tells us that he was one of those babes borne of Christ, and blessed by his hands.

You ask me, then, what good this could have

done? This blessing and touching with Christ's hand, could they not afterwards have fallen into sin? Yes; but, my friend, I will tell you, there are things I cannot deny, might happen; I have no proof that they did not happen, and yet I will not believe that they could happen. Did you ever think upon the fact of Adam's sin, and consider it as possible, that the first of men might have perished everlastingly? Yes; it is possible no doubt, and yet without argument, without proof, without any thing to prevent it, there is hardly a Christian to whom such a supposition will not be too revolting to entertain for a moment. We must, by the instinctive force of nature, believe that Adam did not perish everlastingly. So with these children, blessed of Christ, I confess so much does the voice of nature in me approve and exult in, the voice of nature in their parents, that be they few or be they many, I can as soon think of one of them, blessed by Christ in their helpless infancy perishing, as of Adam.

I have digressed, however, from the subject. Here we have two classes. The disciples rebuking—not suffering—forbidding. We have Christ much displeased at this—laying his hands upon unconscious babes, and blessing them. I ask plainly and candidly upon which side our Baptist brethren would have been. Surely the action of the disciples in the text would have been theirs; their rebukes would have been theirs. Surely, too, all the arguments against bringing infants to be touched and blessed of Christ then, are in every way the same



of the Baptists. Explain, argue, account as you may for the facts of the case, the position of the disciples is the position our Baptists would then have taken ; all the reasons for that position, which, upon the supposition that the disciples were reasonable beings, we can assign to them, are the reasons of the Baptists against infant baptism. And every quality in the infant that meets the Baptist as an impediment to infant baptism is here ; every argument against it, from the nature of baptism itself is here also ; every thing in the parents is here too, that is, in the parents who bring their children to the laver of regeneration ; the parent's faith and parental love ; the babe's unconsciousness ; the taking it in his arms, blessing, and laying hands upon it, all these are in infant baptism ; and the motives in the one are the motives in the other.

It is easy to see what side a Baptist, with the principles and notions Baptists have, would have taken ; forbidding the baptism of infants, they would have forbidden this also. I ask of those who doubt or deny infant baptism, who clearly see, as see they must, that there is no such thing as an exception to the command to baptize all made in the case of infants, because of their infancy, to go over this passage, to consider the position of the disciples, the arguments that must and would have led them, and to think of the fact, that Jesus, our Redeemer, the ever-blessed, was much displeased. To think that they themselves, by "forbidding" them whom he has not

forbidden, may be incurring the displeasure of their Lord!

I know the way men get over this, by the assertion that it is merely an event of our Lord's life, and not a command to baptize infants. Surely so it is, no one said ever it was any more; an act it is, paralled in all the circumstances, and as an example warranting most fully, the inference that we have drawn. Pages may be written, but infants, the babes of our race, are the same as in the days of our Lord—they can come to him as such, now as then. And he who has promised to be with his Church to the end of the world, is the same now as then—the same in mercy, the same in love, the same in all the attributes of that humanity which he took of his mother, and still bears, seated upon God's everlasting throne, which should lead him to bless and pity, and pour out his benedictions upon the babes of our race, brethren of his flesh. His ministers too have the sure promise, that what they do in his name he does for them. And thanks be to God, the hearts of fathers and mothers are the same, and however much they may be perverted by false doctrine and practice, still their feelings cannot be utterly destroyed. And then, though pages upon pages were written, still will these things arise, and dash away the flimsey web. And while they who are in his Church, and therefore taught of him, particularly each time they read this passage, see that he who blameth them for their practice, blameth Christ, for so it is always, "the rebukes of them that

rebuked thee fell upon me." They who are outside and yet sincerely seek the truth at least, must admit, that all the force, all the influence, from this passage, goes clearly and plainly against the supposition, that infant baptism is a thing forbidden.

We have shown that while the position of the question as agitated between the Baptists and other denominations requires a prohibition, in plain words, the command being general, and the position of the Baptists themselves as reformers, arguing against a "positive and injunctive error" of practice, and bestowing upon it such titles as they do, requires the same. There is yet no such prohibition to be found. We then consider that there might be an inference possibly, which would amount to a prohibition. Now, inference being of two kinds, verbal and circumstantial, and also doctrinal, we sought after the first kind, and the reader has seen the circumstantial inference is all the other way. There are no words in the bible from which we can draw the doctrine, that the "baptism of infants is forbidden;" no circumstances from which we can argue, that our Saviour and his apostles held such a dogma; but very plain evidence that the apostles, in their blindness, approached very much to the principles on which it would be founded, and for this incurred our Saviour's heavy rebuke and exceeding displeasure.

This, then, we count enough; we shall turn to doctrinal inference.



## CHAPTER I.

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### PART II.

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#### Objections from Doctrinal Inference.

WE have shown that the baptism of infants is not forbidden in the scriptures. This is what we have at present established, nor do we ask our readers to believe more than that it is not forbidden.

We have shown also, that there is no physical qualification attached to it; no distinction of “infancy” or “adult” years; why then is the physical distinction made? for surely they that sneer at the “baptism of babes,” imply that they will not baptize them “because they are babes,” “because they are infants.” They, with regard to an ordinance of Christ’s spiritual kingdom, make a physical circumstance a disqualification. When, therefore, there is in the scriptures no such disqualification, why do they of their own will establish it? In other words, why do they limit the universality of the ordinance by a condition they cannot find limiting it in holy writ? This is a question of importance, and we shall try in this chapter to answer it.

Now, in proceeding to this question, we shall ask another; we shall, as we have promised at the commencement of this treatise, put aside the discussions of professed theologians and champions of sect, and ask of ordinary men and women, upon this or other points, what is the first thing that suggests itself to the plain Christian of common sense, who is interested in this thing, to the father or the mother who has an infant child, which some, in whom he places confidence, good and pious men of clear and honest minds, would persuade him to have baptized, and others, in his estimation equally good and honest, of equally sound mind, would persuade him not to have baptized? What is the question, that in such a case, would the most naturally arise to the mind of such a one?

Surely it is this, "What advantage is baptism to the infant? What advantage in a Spiritual, a Moral, and a Social point of view?"

These then embrace the whole question upon which the matter is really in such a case decided—the Spiritual, the Moral, the Social advantage.

And fairly and justly we may conclude, that each and every act of religion has its advantages in these three ways, and that to show them is to show the use and advantages of the act, whatever it is. The spiritual benefits of any act are evidenced from the holy scriptures. The moral from its influence upon the moral nature of man, and the social by its operation for his social good. Let this question then be answered in the affirmative—let

it be shown that the baptism of infants has such advantages connected with it, and what they are, and at once the question is decided.

We have had many books for, and many books against the baptism of infants, and we have felt that herein lay their deficiency. They omit this question altogether, "What is the good of infant baptism?"

They argue dryly upon words and texts—they argue as if they had no hearts, and their readers, men and women, fathers and mothers, had no affections; as if there were no such thing as human nature in the world; no such thing as a spiritual world, of which Christ our Lord is King, and we his subjects, recipients of spiritual blessing; no such thing as a religious influence of Christianity upon morals and life, or a course of God's providence ruling and guiding the world for the sake of religion; and, therefore, to men and women that have a practical and real interest in the question, these books on the one side and the other, are dry and without interest; they do not touch the question that should be put in the forefront of the examination—the question we have specified. We put this question in its proper place—the very front of the inquiry.

And the proper answering of this question will enable us to answer another, set forth at the commencement of this chapter, "Why do you not baptize babes?" Honest Baptists may argue and debate, but when they come to examine their motives, this they will find lies at the bottom—

“we see no use in baptism as applied to babes.” They will tell us that they see a manifest use as applied to adults, but as applied to babes they can see none.

Now this is the vital point at issue; this of the uses of baptism in general, and we ask them what are its uses? why do you baptize, or why are you baptized? “The uses? why it is the scripture form of profession of faith, and no more—it has no grace attached to it, no power, no influence; and the reason we do it is, that it is a commanded ordinance.”

Now we put it to the candid and fair man, whether these sentiments do not fairly represent the opinion of the mass of ordinary Christians upon the point of baptism. We put it to them also, whether one holding these sentiments must not, because of his holding them, quite irrespective of the scriptures, deny all baptism of infants; for surely if baptism be of no force, or efficacy, or power, but only a form of profession, infants cannot be benefited by it, or make or consent to it; if there is no use in it, and we do it only because commanded, &c.

Now, as before said, we speak to the Christian with the bible in his hand, and the means of ready reference to its parts, and we assert boldly, that of these two sentiments—first, “That baptism is merely a form of profession without any advantages, spiritual, moral, or social, attached to it;” and secondly, “That we are baptized mainly or merely because it is a commanded ordinance,” that there



is not such an assertion in the scriptures—it cannot be brought forward.

Why then do men not baptize infants? Simply because these two sentiments are in their minds when they come to the examination of the scriptures—they are preached and repeated until they are believed; and they hide away from men's minds the description of baptism given by the scriptures. They make the baptism of adults a mere form of profession—they do away the baptism of infants altogether.

We deny that these sentiments are in the scriptures; furthermore, we assert they are anti-scriptural. When we ask Christians, Why are you baptized? they answer, "Because it is a commanded ordinance." So this is the reason—the sole reason. Does God put it so? Does our most blessed Lord command, without giving any other reason than his command? Under the new spiritual law, are Christians gone back so far into the gloom of Jewish ordinances, that any practice enjoined upon Christians shall be put solely upon the command without any benefit, spiritual, or moral, or social, attached to it? Surely when we think that Christ instead of the mass of ceremonies, rites, and sacrifices, instituted but two sacraments, it must seem to the Christian a most unworthy supposition to imagine that the two institutions of the spiritual kingdom have no spiritual blessings, but are as the Jewish rites, forms, and mere forms, to be performed only because commanded. We assert, that these sentiments are not only not to be found in

the scriptures, but untrue and derogatory to the dignity and truth of the Gospel.

And for this assertion of ours we do not demand our mere word to be taken. We say that in the scriptures baptism has clear and definite description given of its uses, ends, meaning, and purposes; so clear, that to assert that it is a mere form of profession, or to put it upon the command, is neither more nor less than to substitute the opinions of men for the words of God; to make void the commandments of Christ by our tradition, and to annul his word. We assert too, what no Christian can deny, that if we wish to know what are God's ordinances and their uses, we must go for the description to the scriptures themselves. One word of the holy scriptures is worth all the notions and theories of men. We shall bring up, therefore, the scripture descriptions of baptism, both as a proof of what we have asserted as to the unfairness of these two sentiments we have censured, and as a declaration in the literal words of what we believe upon the point.

We know that a multitude of well meaning and good men, are so besotted with these opinions above mentioned, that rather than give them up, they will evade the plain words of Christ and his apostles, regarding his own ordinances; nay, as we have known, they will deny the words of our Lord, at the same time they quote them, rather than give up the tradition of sect. And we pray God to forgive them this their sin of ignorance and of position. Still the scripture is ever the same;

it and its interpretation shall survive all the notions of those who have misinterpreted it. And of this, his own ordinance, the description he has given of its uses, ends, and purposes, shall be believed according to their plain literal meaning, although now they may be obscured in men's minds by these two notions.

And for ourselves, as a minister of the Gospel, we shall never attribute less to any fact or principle, than he has attributed to it himself; we shall never argue upon grounds that are inadequate, or adopt for our own, principles that come not up to the fulness of the Gospel we have received; nor will we attribute so little power to the holy scriptures, and so little considerateness or candor to men, as to believe that none of those who have been in error will reconsider their opinions, or take the plain words of God in their literal and manifest sense, instead of the theories of men.

And this we say, with the fact broadly before our eyes, as to the prevalence of the opinions we reprobate. With the knowledge, how strange to take the words of the scripture as they stand will appear to men. We do believe, in despite of these things, that many will bethink themselves, reconsider their opinions, and come to see the truth.

We shall, therefore, place the passages that describe baptism in the bible together.

“He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.” (Mark xvi. 16.)

“The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth now save us, (not the putting away the filth of

the flesh,) but the answer of a pure conscience before God." (1 Peter iii. 21.)

"Ye are buried with Christ by baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." (Col. ii. 12.)

"As many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death; therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead, even so should we walk in newness of life." (Rom. vi. 3, 4.)

"As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." (Gal. iii. 27.)

"By one Spirit we have been baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, bond or free." (1 Cor. xii. 13.)

"Peter said, Repent, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." (Acts ii. 38.)

"Ananias said unto Saul, why tarriest thou? arise, and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord." (Acts xxii. 16.)

"He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Titus iii. 5.)

"Jesus said, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." (John iii. 5.)

In Hebrews vi. 1, the doctrine of baptism is one of the first principles of the Gospel, along with faith, repentance, laying on of hands, resurrection from the dead, and eternal judgment.

We address not those who deny water baptism, but those who, admitting the necessity of water, doubt or deny the validity of the baptism of infants; and we ask them to look at these texts, just as they stand; to think upon them as the words of the Holy Spirit; are these of a piece with the sentiment that says, "baptism is a form of profession and nothing more?" or, "that we are baptized only because it is a commanded ordinance?" or rather, are not various effects attributed here to baptism, when received by living faith, following upon repentance? effects which wholly contradict the sentiments of ordinary Christians upon the point?

Surely every Christian must admit, that it is as we say, that these texts, taken honestly, as they stand, in the literal sense, ascribe specific effects to the ordinance.

We shall go a little further; we say, that with their notions and their doctrines, ordinary Christians dare not use these texts as they use the rest of the scriptures. When the cry arises from one or many, "What shall we do to be saved?" dare they say as Peter, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus, *for the remission of sins?*"—dare they say, as Ananias to the repentant Saul, "*Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord?*"—dare they say, "We are saved by baptism," or, "we are buried with Christ by baptism," or, "he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved?" or can they use the words, "Except ye be born of water

and the Spirit, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven?"

Certainly not; these texts ordinary professors dare not use as they stand, in the plain literal sense of them; they dare not use them, or even think of them, without some salvo, some limitation, actually doing away the whole sense of the words. And their preachers preach not upon them, except for the purpose of doing away with their force, and proving that they mean *nothing*.

Is not this true, and does it not betoken something wrong in the whole state of ordinary religion, that men should shrink back from the plain literal sense of God's words, and do it away, because they cannot bear with it? I ask the honest and candid inquirer to look at this fact, not to shrink back as men do sometimes, from truths, unpleasant and unsuitable, but to face it, and ask himself, is it not so with him? and then I ask him to go back to these notions I have above specified, and to see whether they are not his motives; to examine them by the scriptures, and to cast them aside.

But the reader will say, who believes them as they stand, without any salvo, in the plain evident sense of them? who believes that baptism is for the remission of sins? who believes that it is a saving ordinance? who believes that we are buried with him by baptism; or that therein we are born of water and the Spirit?

The reader will remember that I am a clergyman of the Episcopal Church, and that I come

before him in no disguise of affected candor, word, liberality, or monk-mekness, but as what I am, a clergyman of the Church, and as such I say I do. I say, moreover, that it would seem by the next paragraph, that as a clergyman of the Church, I must be either very dishonest, very stupid, or very much influenced by prejudice, if I do not, owing to the book we use, take these in the literal and manifest sense.

When I catechise children, I ask them, "Who gave you your name?" and they reply, "My sponsors in baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." An answer manifestly consistent with the literal sense of these texts; manifestly inconsistent with the other notions. In the service for baptism, of infants or adults after baptism, I declare to them, "that they are now born again, and made heirs of everlasting life." Or in that of adults, "that *these persons* are regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's Church." In a solemn prayer before the whole congregation, I implore God to give the holy Spirit, "that these persons, being born again and made heirs of everlasting salvation, may continue his servants." And likewise I apply most plainly the passage in St. Peter, asserting "baptism to be a saving ordinance." And, lastly, in the solemn creed, in which both minister and people, with one voice together, confess upon the days of communion, I plainly declare myself to believe "in one baptism for the

remission of sins." What were I then if I did not believe in the above quoted texts literally taken?

This is the case with the twelve hundred clergy of the Church in this country; the eighteen thousand of the English Church. And this, I will say, before Luther was, was the opinion of the Church from Christ downward; and more than this, the ordinary common sense man, when he comes to think of it, will see is the plain doctrine of the scriptures.

I am aware that to many candid and sincere searchers after the truth as it is in our blessed Lord Jesus, the assertion will seem most startling, and the first thought that will arise in their mind, will be that of Nicodemus on the same subject, "how can these things be!" To such persons I say, I seek not to force upon your mind the doctrine to which you see I assent, and in which I believe, even although I believe that I have for it stronger evidence, for I know the power of previous education; I know the force of circumstances; only these two things I ask, first, not to think a doctrine strange which has in its favor the united belief of so many Christian clergy and people, and the literal sense of holy writ, but to consider it at least worthy of examination and consideration; and, secondly, to go on with me and see "how these things can be;" and whether they are in accordance with the spiritual, the moral, and the providential government of God over man in this world.

The doctrine then, which I say, is the doctrine



of the scriptures upon this matter, and most plainly the doctrine of the texts that I have quoted, is this, that in baptism received upon repentance with living faith, we “are born of water and the Spirit.” And this embraces the following consequences:—1st. The remission of sins. 2dly. The being introduced into the kingdom of heaven, that is, the Church of God. 3dly. The gift of sufficient grace. 4thly. The dwelling of the Holy Spirit in us. 5thly. The mystical union of Christ our Lord with man, whereby we are made partakers of his life and resurrection—power. And, 6thly. That the baptized are in the communion of saints, having a participation in all the prayers and spiritual blessings of the holy on earth, and the holy departed; and also are under the immediate guardianship and care of the holy angels, whereby he ministers to them that love him.

All these gifts are to him who, being of mature years, received baptism in faith, or to the helpless and innocent babe, gifts conveyed through God’s grace, by his sacrament of baptism. If this be a true statement, are there not reasons enough for the baptism of infants as well as those of maturer years? Is it not sufficiently manifest, that the forgetting these truths is the reason why infants are not baptized?

And that as I have declared in the first part of this chapter, that the natural question that arises to the minds of men, and that upon which it is decided, is, What are the advantages and uses of baptism in general? and then the mind for itself

decides upon the particular case of infant baptism ; so the proper method of deciding, is to examine the doctrine of baptism in general. I propose, therefore, in the following chapter, to ask how can these these things be? To take the system of the Gospel, and see how far they agree with it.

## CHAPTER II.

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### PART II.

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How can these things be ?

WE begin this chapter with an assertion which no one that has read the scriptures can doubt ; that from the first time that God revealed himself to man to the present time, his dealings have been uniform, of a piece one with another. And it is because of this uniformity, that we receive the Old as well as the New Testament. The Christian does not reject the Old Testament, he sees that the same God who has once for all revealed himself in Jesus Christ, revealed himself to Abraham and the patriarchs, after that to Moses, and then to us. As to degree, the dispensations differ ; as to the mode and manner, these are uniform.

Now the common mode, what is it ? Every one will say, the mode of covenants. There are, says the holy apostle Paul, two covenants, “ the one from Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage ; ” again, “ Jesus the mediator of the new covenant ; ” and a hundred other passages which might be quoted, all testifying to the same thing. The two

dispensations then, have been two covenants. The new dispensation is just as much a covenant as the old.

Now let us look at this fact a little more distinctly, and try to settle in our mind what it means. The curse and plague of religion in this age is, that we have so habituated ourselves to metaphor, that every thing has become a metaphor. A man takes Dr. Watt's paper, called a form of covenant, he writes it down, solemnly prays over it, and in its form he calls that a covenant with God. It is *a vow*, a series of good resolutions, *no covenant* with God. A very respectable denomination has a right of meeting yearly, in which they read a series of good resolutions, in which every one present is supposed to join; this is called "the renewal of the covenant"—metaphor again. A man is convinced of sin, he promises in his heart obedience to God, this is called a *covenant* with himself—these are metaphors. The scripture meaning of the word covenant is lost by our metaphoric talk. It has slidden away into vagueness, and become a mere phrase. Surely it has been so.

The fact that there is a covenant in the Christian dispensation between God and man, has come to have very little belief given it; men talk about it, they do not realize the fulness of its meaning.

Now let us cast aside these metaphoric notions, and remembering that a promise or vow binds only one party, and is not a "covenant," but that on the contrary, a covenant is binding upon two: let us look at the fact, and we shall find it one of

astounding magnitude, and over-powering to the intellect, as well as the feelings of man. Here am I, a creature of yesterday, frail and feeble, limited in power and knowledge, impure and unholy, my position as well as my nature leading me to evil; and on the other side is the Almighty and Omniscient, the Lord of the universe, the Creator and Ruler of all, pure and holy, and between me and him there can be a covenant, an agreement binding both parties.

By virtue of this, the Omniscient shall consult for *me*, and from the fathomless abyss of boundless wisdom he shall provide for *me*; by virtue of this, the web of circumstance, that is woven in the loom of time, shall be so arranged, each circumstance that came in contact with *me*, as to favor me, the rain shall descend, but as he will, for *my* good, and all nature be modified to benefit *me*. I ask, is not this an overpowering idea, is it not one, which from its very magnitude, is startling and astounding to man.

And at the same time it is the very foundation and basis of the Gospel, and yet who sufficiently realizes it at the present day? It has, as it were, slipped away from the minds of men; it has almost perished from religion. Our own covenants with ourselves, covenants to act so and so, covenants with religious societies or churches, as they are called, or mere mental resolutions to adhere to God; all these metaphoric things have slipped in, they have obscured the *true covenant*, the fact of a real agreement between God and man, binding

both parties, which, if we may use the expression, is the fundamental part of Christianity.

The truth of this assertion may be seen by a comparison. We know that infidelity is the prevailing curse of this country, which is called a Christian country. There are a large mass of men called unprofessors, who have no belief in the facts of the Gospel. And among those called Christians, every sect denies, or disputes, or doubts, something or other. I speak not of faith here, but of bare belief—belief is unfrequent. What is the reason of this? We have forgotten the fact of a true and real *covenant* between God and man.

Now taking the Jews as a people under a covenant, we find hardly such a thing among them as this, we call infidelity or want of belief. Excepting the case of the Sadducees, and they hardly can come within the rule, for they only disbelieved in those things not manifestly revealed in them; they were also few in numbers, and rather a political faction than a religious sect. With the Jews belief did not come with the worst of times, or in the worst of men. They ever knew that they were God's covenanted people, each of them ever acknowledged that he was under that *covenant*. His passions might lead him astray after the gods of the heathen, and the orgies of licentiousness and vice that always attended their religious worship. Their own stubbornness and obstinacy might lead them to rebel against the yoke under which they were, still belief in the facts and truths of the Mosaic revelation always existed, and if men sin-

ned, it was against that belief. Belief was impressed upon the minds of all the Hebrew nation.

Now let us see what kept up this belief in the facts of revelation. The realization of the fact of a covenant. This one idea passed through all the relations of life manward as well as Godward. What was the circumcision of all the children but the evidence of that covenant? sacrifice, but the keeping it before his mind? If you examine the life of a few under the old law, you will find that all circumstances, however manifold, served to impress the one idea upon him, that *man was bound unto God, and God unto man*, really and truly. Was he at Jerusalem, the capital of the nation, then the awful temple with its services, was an embodiment of the idea, that God was bound unto man. The Jew could look up to its gorgeous and splendid buildings, absurd and foolish upon any other idea than that its builder felt that covenant to be a reality more precious than the precious stone, and would prolong the feeling to future ages; and the Hebrew, looking upon it, felt that it was more precious than gold, and marble, and cedar, and jewels, and the skill of the workmen, and the wealth of kings. The daily sacrifice brought the same idea close home to his ordinary life, and the high and solemn festival made it a part of those extraordinary overflowings of joy, that are so natural to the heart of man, that if they are not instituted for him, he will institute them for himself. So the fasts, the stated seasons of sorrow, equally natural, in like manner, presented the same idea. In his polity too, it was

most thoroughly interwoven, and stood out in the foreground of his history. No fabled hero obscurely seen through the darkness of the past, was the founder of his race; no robber chieftain, glorified by legendary ballads, was his progenitor. No: in the clear light, light of history, stood forth in its minutest circumstances, *the covenant* of Abraham, his ancestor, by the oaks of Mamre. The past of the Jew was historical, not legendary or fabulous.

The covenant too, was united, as we may see in the books of Moses with all the affections of his heart, with paternal reverence to parents, with love to family, nay, with the natural benevolence that is in the heart of man. He was to pity the stranger, "because thou wast a stranger in the land of Egypt, and I brought thee forth, not because thou wast great, for thou wast the meanest of nations, but for Abraham my servant's sake, and *my covenant* with him." And, furthermore, the Jews personal services, these all tended to the same thing, to the impressing on his mind the wonderful fact of the covenant between God and man.

Now, in view of all these things, this fact, so wonderful, so extraordinary, so likely to shock belief, could not but be believed by the Jews. In fact, he could not escape from a conviction of its truth. Pride, or passion, or sensuality, or that brutish stubbornness, so natural to the race, with which God rebuked them of old, might cause the Israelite to rebel, still, by this, his action must be against his belief, against the ineffaceable convic-



tions of his whole life. We see that what we call an infidel—the Jew could not be.

With this state of matters, contrast the state of Christianity at the present day—Christianity being the *new covenant*; look at this weak, sluggish mass of inconsistent sects which, by the complaisant politeness of the world, is denominated Christianity, and wherein is its weakness? in this, that the idea of a *covenant, actual and real*, has perished, and a metaphor has taken its place. I have asked professors of religion: have they the certainty of belief, the same confidence of faith, in their own position, that the old Jews had? Certainly they have not, for but few of those called orthodox, but will allow that other sects, as opposite as may be to them, are just as certain. Have they the belief in the facts of the scripture? No: when the common articles are counted, they are but few in number, amounting to little more than what is called natural religion. And what is the reason, this one, that to the old Jews, the “Church in the wilderness,” as St. Paul calls it, the one idea of a covenant, a true and real covenant between God and man belonged, but now it has perished out of the ordinary religion. External circumstances all presented that one idea to them; the mind could not escape it, it was forced in upon the mind by the concurrent testimony of all circumstances from earliest youth to extremest age. And now for the want of that one idea, forming and moulding all circumstances to itself, external circumstances all tend to unbelief. That idea of a covenant is essentially in its result

the idea of unity. Now the very aspect of a sect-ent Christianity is an argument to unbelief. And Christians themselves, instead of having the outward world of man as an evidence to the faith, have it as an evidence against it. They are flung inwardly upon their feelings, and this again tends to unbelief, for the wise and the thoughtful all over the country are rapidly coming to the conclusion, that feeling is no test of truth, and so all things tend to unbelief. This, no matter what men may say, is the true source and origin of infidelity.

So belief among the multitude of non-professors is gone. If they had belief in the facts of the Gospel, as the rebellious Israelite had in the facts of Moses' law, because of the covenant and the way outward things impressed it upon him; as the English peasant and artizan had, because of the same fact, upheld by the working of a liturgy weekly used; as the rude Russian serf has, because of the services of his Church; a stand could be taken and a foundation made for faith upon that belief; but now that belief is fast going, or already gone. True it is, that some time ago, there was a lingering belief in the fact of eternal punishments for the wicked, so plainly asserted in the scripture; for the stream of a nation's life precipitates but slowly the truth of revelation that ages of faith have infused into it; just as the particles of land in the Mississippi, will, by the Missouri, not fall to the bottom for hundreds of miles below their confluence. But men who were preachers took their stand upon this, the last element of Christianity, in a

fierce and cruelly presumptuous manner, and where is it now? It is gone. I err not when I say, that from the mass of non-professors minds it has vanished; that of the great majority of non-professors, this, the last tradition of Christianity, the time when men really and truly believed in a covenant with God, has vanished.

Professors of religion under the banner of a sect-rent Christianity! preachers of a multifarious Christianity, perishing every day, here is your weakness—the want of a fast and firm persuasion in a true and real covenant between God and man! a want that cannot be supplied by cart-loads of evidences of Christianity, or the fiercest invectives against infidels. You have made the gap yourselves.

From John Calvin, who invented as a substitute, the idea of an invisible Church, such an idea is your abhorrence. For a covenant between God and man implies unity, it *implies one visible covenanted body, a Church*, co-extensive with the profession of Christianity; and it is because of this oneness and extensiveness, that outward circumstances are so arranged as to impress the mind with belief, as in the case of the Jewish Church, which I have instanced.

However, as this is the effect of the circumstance outwardly, we shall go to consider the effect upon the mind of man inwardly. The first manifest effect upon the minds of all is belief, belief in the facts of the scriptures, and in its principles, as distinguished from living faith. As I have shown in the case of the Jews, all under a “covenant”

must believe, when the idea is thoroughly realized in practice, as it is—that is, when it is no metaphor, nor taken in a metaphoric sense. I have shown how it took place with regard to the Jews; now I shall just show how it takes place with us—Churchmen, who still possess the idea of a “covenant.”

Others use extempore prayers, we a liturgy, or set form of words. Consider what is the condition of prayer: it reasons not, it therefore argues not, and doubts not, whatever matters of belief are brought in during prayer one doubts not of. In this one form of prayer, all articles of belief are brought in, even the loftiest, and those upon which there has been most dispute, the clergyman using the liturgy takes for granted, and the congregation following him takes also for granted. He, therefore, in a measure imposes them without arguing; the people, when they follow him, take them without debate. For fifty-two Sundays in the year the same course is pursued—it manifestly tends to belief.

We believe in a covenant—that covenant including all, and, therefore, children. We shall take a boy of ten years of age in the Church; the first thing his father and mother do, is to put in his hand a prayer book, to teach him the service. From that time on, he reads the service; he says, without debate, without arguing, “O God, the Son, the Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us: O God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father, and the Son, have mercy upon us, miserable

sinner;” he repeats daily the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments. He does this from childhood through youth. What is the impression? That of belief, when a doubt comes up on any article of the Christian faith in the years of doubt, that is, of advancing manhood. For infancy doubts not; it is the age of faith; the time of doubt is when the passions show themselves, and we begin to be brought in contact with a world whose practice and principle require us not to believe; then the impression has been made, the ground is pre-occupied, doubt is at a disadvantage. He cannot readily be brought to disbelieve those things which, without doubt, he has repeated in the undoubting age of youth; which he has heard, each Lord’s day, five hundred people confess, and those whom he the most respected for probity and talents; if he sink into infidelity, it must be with a mighty effort and struggle. The same is the effect upon the riper mind of man, though in a less degree.

When he listens to an extempore prayer, which, being the composition of an individual, has but his authority, he is not trained to assent to it, there is no moral compulsion, as in the other case; his reasoning powers are immature, and their very immaturity makes doubt. He hears a preacher preaching upon the eternity of punishment; in his childish mind he says—“God is most merciful, there can be no hell;” or he says—“The Father is greater than the Son, therefore the Son cannot be God, according to the scriptures, since there cannot be a less God and a greater God.” All

infidelity, that is, all deficiency of belief, has marked upon it immaturity of the reasoning powers; it originates, then, when the passions begin to arise and the reason is unripe. The age of childhood and youth, this is the time of faith, of undoubting belief upon authority. The use of a liturgy takes advantage of this, and secures belief, in the age when unbelief springs up. *It is founded upon the idea of a covenant, and supposes it*, and upon that, and that alone, can it be justified.

To show the force of this, I shall bring forward a very curious circumstance, illustrative also of the very point of this treatise, the use of infant baptism. Where is there a point at present more disputed? Certainly none among the non-Episcopal sects. We Churchmen, as I have said, are certain in our resolution, the Baptists are certain in their negative; but among all others it is a point of very great uncertainty, one upon which the minds of professors are most exceedingly exercised. Yet when the first Baptist arose, Peter de Bruis, in the twelfth century, one of the holiest men of his day, Peter of Clugny, in writing against him, says—“What an absurdity is your doctrine. For he, manifestly, that is not baptized with the baptism of Christ, is no Christian; *so, as all France, Spain, Germany, Italy, and all Europe, during three hundred years, or almost five hundred, has had no one who was not baptized in infancy, so it has had no Christian.*”

Such was the effect of the *idea of a covenant*, and the unity of faith and practice arising from it, that one of the points most debated now among

those from whom the idea of a covenant has departed, then no one doubted, among so many nations, for five hundred years.

The same thing is the case among us now. Naturally, easily, and of course, the Churchman believes in infant baptism, and baptizes his children; we, the clergy of the Church, find no difficulty in persuading them to it. Can others say the same?

What, then, is the effect of a covenant upon the truly faithful? For, in the first place, I have shown that upon all, it is that of belief in all doctrines whatsoever. The truly faithful, therefore, has this advantage also, all the doctrines of Christianity he believes; has no doubt of their truth; his work is to live, to act, to do as a Christian. By the idea of an actual, and real, and true covenant, when the covenant is made, the man is a Christian, a subject of our Lord Christ, a member of his family, a child of the covenant, an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. He may be a bad Christian, but he *ceases not to be a Christian*; he may be a rebellious subject, but no rebellion of his frees him *from being a subject*; an evil member, but he does *not cease being a member*.

The idea of a kingdom, or a covenanted body, or a family, implies authority to correct; of magistrates, for the reform of evil subjects, implies law, and punishment, and reformation for them, and discipline: so the idea of a Christian covenant implies the bad to remain members still, *under the law*. The prevalent idea among those who are of the sects is, that a man ceases to be a Christian,

ceases to be a member of the covenant, when he sins. Which is the true notion, any one may see by Christ's own description of the Church, his kingdom, as a field with tares and wheat; a net, with good fish and bad. Whereas, upon the ordinary notion, I am now a Christian, bound in covenant with God; I fall away, and then I am no Christian, outside the covenant, and have no claims upon it, and, as a consequence, *it has no claims upon me.*

And what effect has it upon the faithful when compared with the other doctrine? "I believe in Christ, and have faith that he is my Saviour, outward forms are nothing to me," says the one; what then is your highest evidence? Surely it is neither more nor less than that inward feeling; and how your inward feeling that you have faith in Christ and that Christ is your Saviour, can make him your Saviour, is what certainly cannot be seen from the Scriptures. The strength of that feeling, the earnestness and the intensity of it, are certainly no proof of the fact, any more than the idea of a madman which he possesses that he is heir to the king of England makes him his heir, or that he is in alliance with the emperor of Morocco makes him so. On this *feeling* men place their salvation, on the strength of it, the evidence of it. To this I say, that the feeling makes nothing; the strength or weakness of it still less; for how does the feeling prove itself true? You feel that you are a son of God by the adoption; another man, in the lunatic asylum, feels a deal stronger than



you do, that he is Jesus Christ. He goes for feeling, and so do you—which of you is right? Again, your elevation of feeling is an evidence, his feeling is far more elevated.

What, then, is the use of feeling? A very great use, indeed, when you have an actual and *real covenant*, an external fact of which your senses and your understanding give you evidence. Your feeling is the hand by which you hold on to this, and if your feeling should at any time change, still you have the certain fact to hold on to, the one supports the other.

Let us put it in this way: here is the fact that Christ was born, that He died for the sins of the whole world, this is a fact real and true; but still it is in the past as to time, eighteen hundred years have elapsed since then. This fact does not come directly and immediate to us, but through the evidence of a book. This causes the possibility of a doubt; just as the facts of Moses' mission and Moses' miracles, when the time of miracles and prophecy had passed, would have been to an Israelite, without a Jewish Church. But the covenant founded upon this was an actual and real covenant, an evidence palpable and plain, to every Israelite of the truth of the facts; an evidence which, as we have remarked, no Israelite could get by. And, furthermore, circumcision, the seal of that covenant, was an evidence to him personally and individually. "Why am I circumcised?" he would say; "why, but that I am under a covenant?" It was a symbol and sign of the covenant

which he bore in his person ; and, as all symbols do, it brought close home to himself personally all the facts connected with that covenant. It was an outward symbol, not a spiritual one ; and at the same time it brought close home to him the spiritual ideas ; it was a seal of the righteousness which is by faith. The outward symbol was an *actual fact*, upon which his own state of feeling could have no effect ; and, therefore, it served as a support, and foundation, and buoy-rope, (if I may use the expression,) for his faith to rest upon, and to hold on by. It was a personal testimony that he was actually and really in covenant with God ; a witness to him, that if he lived by God's laws and according to the conditions, then had he the sure promise of the Almighty and Omniscient that all circumstances should be controlled for him ; a witness, too, that if he rebelled, then was he rebellious against his God, disobedient to his most merciful Father, and would suffer all the penalties of that disobedience. The reader of the bible may see a strong proof of the views before him, as to the effect of an outward covenant, as regards belief in the fact that in the reproaches God makes the Israelites, through his prophets, disobedience, obstinacy, and rebellion, these are the sins with which he rebukes them ; but want of belief in the facts, or what we call infidelity, in no case does he rebuke them for this.

I shall now bring forward the proofs from scripture of a covenant, actual and true, with us Christians. His prophecy in the old testament is

this, (Jer. xxxi. 31,) "I will make with them a new covenant;" (Heb. viii. 7,) a new covenant, as the Apostle notes, makes the first old. There is, therefore, an old covenant and a new; both covenants, the one old and the other new? Does the new covenant being new make it less a covenant? Certainly not, it is a covenant still. But there are differences? certainly there are—and what are they? "Oh," say they that believe the covenant to be merely internal, "the new one, the first covenant was with the Jew as member of a family descended from one man, as of a nation, of a people chosen out, and having a priesthood; our covenant is of the individual man, without reference to family, and with no priesthood."

This, unquestionably, is the belief of the mass of ordinary Christians. How it agrees with Paul's proof that Christians are spiritually and actually the children of Abraham, I cannot see; how it agrees with the fact that Christ remains forever a priest after the order of Melchezideck, I cannot see; nor how it agrees with the assertion of his eternal priesthood in heaven. But, as it were by the spirit of prophecy, to meet all objections upon this score, the holy apostle Peter asserts the direct contrary; "Ye," says he, "are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." (1 Peter ii. 8.) The epistle is general, addressed to the whole body of Christians throughout the world. He tells this body, there-

fore, that they are a generation, or family, so were the Israelites ; that they are chosen as a generation, so they were ; that they are a royal priesthood, a people, or nation, so were the Jews ; “ holy,” that is, set apart by a covenant with God, who is holy for the purposes of holiness, and peculiar ; that is as the Israelites, as a plain historical fact, have always been from all the nations who make up the body of what is called the world, and as the Christian Church has always been, peculiar and strange to those without. This text at once refutes the above notion. Men, of course, may think this is metaphorical ; I care not for them. They may say it refers to the invisible body of the elect ; when a nation, a generation, a people, is shown to have been invisible, when it is shown that the body of Christians is invisible, then we may believe that notion, not till then. The fact is this, Peter addressed the visible Church, the whole body of Christians in his day, who had one faith, one God, one baptism, and asserted that with them, as with *one body*, the covenant was made, and with each one as a member of that body. Nor can we find in holy scriptures so much as the mention of “ an invisible Church,” much less the idea of it. The Church of God, the covenanted body is visible, its covenant is one manifest to the senses, the seal of the covenant is a visible external fact.

One will say, then, the first business when we repent and have faith in the Lord Jesus, is to be united by baptism with the visible Church ; and which is that ? Take Peter’s description, and

there is no difficulty—it is peculiar. None of the non-Episcopal sects are so, they have no peculiarity in worship, rites, or modes of thinking, they are all “on the broad basis of Christian liberality.” Episcopal churches only are “peculiar.”

The Church is apostolic, has the succession of authority and ministry; well, but so has the Roman Church, and which shall we unite with? Little difficulty there either. Israel was God’s *covenanted* people, with them was the visible *covenant*; yet Israel was divided in two parts, Judah and Samaria—the first retained the pure worship of God, the last was idolatrous. So it is with the two branches here: saint-worship, money-worship, angel-worship, these at once point out which answers to Samaria, and what the proper mode of acting in such a case.

There is a visible body, then, a covenanted body, a visible covenant, and visible members; and these last divided in two classes, the disobedient and rebellious, and the obedient and good. Now, we asserted in our last chapter, that to those brought into the Church by baptism certain privileges belong, as under the Jewish law certain privileges belonged to those brought under it; we asserted, too, that these privileges were exclusive, that is, belonged to them alone, in virtue of their having entered within the covenant; and that they are attributed to baptism, in virtue of baptism being the door and entrance into the covenant now.

And this brings us to another part of the subject, which, too, has been wrought into metaphor.

The old covenant, it is well known, concerned mainly temporal things; the new covenant is "spiritual." Now what does "spiritual" mean? Take it as men take it, and you will find spiritual means "figurative;" a "spiritual covenant" is a metaphoric covenant; spiritual blessings are the general blessings of Christianity.

No, there is no such vagueness about it, no such unreality. There are two worlds, the visible world, and the spiritual world, or world of spirits; and spiritual blessings are blessings that are connected with the world of spirits—they are *real* and *actual*, although spiritual.

As being of the spiritual world, they are unseen; faith, which is the evidence of things unseen, is their evidence, faith in God's word and his power. On that principle I shall deal with the matter. Here is the *covenant*, a visible and real covenanted body, the Church; a visible and real seal, the sacrament of baptism; all these facts are visible, tangible, proveable. Here are the spiritual blessings, the object of faith, not of the senses, asserted in the scriptures, believed in by faith, without proof, by the members of the covenant through all ages. You, outside the covenant, ask us how it can be, you want proof; we give you none, because none can be given; we bring you the plain words of scripture asserting them, and then we say, "we believe." If you choose to take it, well and good; if not, you may go on your own way, for your position, as one in fact not united with the visible Church of Christ, but a sect, is such as

naturally to incline you to disbelieve in the fact of a real visible covenant, having spritual blessings attached to it; and if the plain and manifest words of the scripture cause you no belief, my arguments will have no effect.

The first doctrine, then, which I specified in the last chapter, is, that coming to baptism with repentance from dead works, and faith in the Lord Jesus as requisites, we receive the blessings of regeneration; we are introduced into the Church, that is, into the kingdom of God upon earth; we have the adoption of sons; we are made members of Christ, children of God, inheritors of the kingdom of heaven; all these phrases implying one and the same thing—regeneration. We shall give a few texts.

1. "Except a man be born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."

2. "He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Tit. iii. 5.)

3. "Therefore we are buried by baptism into death." (Rom. vi. 4.)

4. "As many as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death." (Rom. vi. 3.)

5. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." (Gal. iii. 26, 27.)

6. "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be glorified together with him." (Rom. viii. 17.)

7. "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." (Mark xvi. 16.)

8. "Go ye, and make disciples of (out of) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. xxviii. 19.)

9. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John i. 12, 13.) *See No. 1.*

Now let us take these passages in their plain sense, and what do they say, neither more nor less, than that we are born of "water and the Spirit." They hang together in asserting this doctrine, that in baptism we are taken out of the world and placed in the kingdom of God—the visible Church of God. This is the plain and evident sense; but how can it be?

As I said before, I cannot tell; I have faith that it is so. Is it not of a piece with God's dealing in other things? Look at the case of the Syrian leper coming to be healed of his disease, he was desired to dip seven times in the Jordan. How was he healed? Simply because God chose to attach to the use of that washing the benefit. The water was not medicinal, by no power of it was he healed. Yet most undoubtedly had he not dipped in the water, he could not have been healed. So with baptism.

Look at Christ ordering the blind man to bathe



in Siloam and receive his sight: here too, the instrument was nothing in itself, yet the effect followed by its use, would have followed by the use of nothing else. Look at the use of means in general, by God who is almighty, and think that he may establish any means he pleases, and the effect will follow. If, in these cases, God acted manifestly and plainly, is it now incredible, especially when he himself has asserted it in plain words.

The next benefit that is in the holy scriptures attached to baptism, is the remission of sins.

Acts ii. 38. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins."

Acts xxii. 16. "Ananias said unto Saul, why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Rom. vi. 3, 4. "So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death. (By his death applies the pardon of sin.) "Then we are buried with him by baptism unto death."

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

"All power is given me in heaven and earth, go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name," &c.

"All power in heaven and earth," i. e. I am God omnipotent, by gift from the Father, "go ye therefore teach all nations." The word therefore implies a direct commission from Christ, in refer-

ence to his power it must be in either "teach" or "baptize;" "teach" belongs to any man, "baptize" only to those commissioned. Baptism is for the forgiveness of sins, and none but Almighty power can forgive sins. The assertion, therefore, of Almighty power, in the first clause, directly implies that baptism is for the forgiveness of sins.

Peter's assertion, that baptism is a saving ordinance, implies remission of sins—since this is salvation.

Acts x. 43. "To him give all the prophets witness, that whosoever believeth on him should receive remission of sins." And then, verse 38, "He commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."

"With the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Luke i. 77. "To give knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins."

Christ's baptism is of the Holy Ghost, therefore of God, for the remission of sins. Here then is baptism plainly said to be for the remission of sins, just as plainly as I say in our creed, that "I believe one baptism for the remission of sins." There is no text that says it is *not* for the remission of sins, and only *a mere form*. There is no passage that asserts that *faith without baptism can obtain remission of sins for the unbaptized*. The assertion of the scriptures is plainly, that repentance and faith being required as prerequisites, baptism is for the forgiveness of sins, and absolutely necessary, except in the uncovenanted mercies of God.

Again, we are met in this by the old question, "How can this be?" Again we see the manifest inclination to deny the very words of the holy scriptures, because we cannot quite understand the mode.

Men will say, we cannot believe that to the sprinkling or immersion in water, such a gift can be attached. I do not believe myself it can. Baptism is a little more than this. First: It is a solemn sacrifice on the part of the officiating clergyman, wherein he offers to the power of the Father, Son, and Spirit, the subject of it. Secondly: On the part of the individual or sponsors, it is a solemn dedication of himself to God's service. Thirdly: It is a covenant concluded by a symbolic action between the individual and Almighty God. And, fourthly: It is wrought by the immediate power of the Holy Ghost.

If Christians viewed it in this light, as a solemn sacrifice to Almighty God, appointed by his Son: as a solemn dedication of the individual; as the seal and completing rite of a covenant for the remission of sin, and as brought out and completed by the Holy Spirit, there would be few such cavillings.

If it cannot be for the remission of sins, pray what can? Wherein does faith so much meet as here? Here is the clergyman praying that this man be forgiven, the man himself praying the same, his witnesses and the congregation. If faith be the means whereby we are to obtain all spiritual blessing, when or at what other time and place are

we to expect it more than at such a conjuncture as this? If, when two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them, is not the Saviour present then? "If two of you shall agree upon earth, touching any thing they shall ask, it shall be done for them by my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. xviii. 19.) Shall we not expect at the baptism of an individual the promise he has made of remission of sins at his holy baptism, when we unite in praying for it?

But how can remission of sins be attached to baptism, even admitting that it is all that we say, an offering on the part of the clergyman, a dedication on the part of the individual, and the seal of a covenant? It avails in this way, that it is wrought by the direct power of the holy Spirit. John's baptism he himself distinguishes from the baptism of Christ, that he indeed baptized unto repentance, "but there cometh one after me, that shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." And, accordingly, we find in the Acts, Paul found certain disciples at Ephesus, "He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? They said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? They said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts xix. 1—5.)

The distinction had been laid down by John; here it was carried out by Paul. The distinction was this, that the baptism of John was a baptism upon repentance unto faith, a preparation to the full blessings of Christianity. Christ's baptism, a baptism in which the agent was the Holy Spirit; and, therefore, it is that the baptism of Christ is a baptism for the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit being God Almighty, and in it forgiving, by that power, sins.

Accordingly, in the holy scriptures throughout we find the Spirit mentioned in connexion with baptism. I have brought those two passages together, and shown the last especially, fully as it is, that I may notice two facts in it. First, it is twisted round in the most extraordinary way, to show that these men were not rebaptized. I argue not upon it. People may take it as it stands or not. I take it as it stands.

They who do not have strong motives in their tradition. First, they assert that John's baptism was the same as Christ's baptism; secondly, they deny that Christian baptism is for the remission of sins; thirdly, in the words since "ye believed," they, upon their principle, that faith without baptism can give remission of sins, cannot see any necessity of baptizing these "believers" again. Men that come to such a text with such principles, must of course explain it as well as they can, to argue with these principles.

Had they looked to Paul they might have seen that he had repentance, and had faith in Christ,

and three days afterward Ananias baptized him for the remission of sins; had they looked to the scriptures they would have seen that, "by one Spirit we are baptized into one body;" had they looked to John's own description, they would have seen that his was not baptism of the Spirit. I argue not upon the point with them, for in their denial of the character of Christian baptism, which the scriptures assert in plain words, there is motive enough to enable them to withstand any argument of mine.

I believe in the remission of sins, because the baptism of Christ for this is wrought by the Spirit. "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." (John iii. 5.) "Ye are washed, (that is, baptized,) ye are sanctified, ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, (a short way of mentioning the baptismal form, as in another place, 'they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus,') and by the Spirit of our God," (1 Cor. vi. 11,) in which the agency of the Spirit in baptism is directly asserted. Again, in reference to baptism, the seal of the Christian covenant, as was circumcision of the Jewish, he says, "God hath given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." (2 Cor. i. 22.)

If one, therefore, ask of me why I believe in baptism for the remission of sins, I say, because it is plainly asserted in the holy scriptures, and one word of them I dare not deny.

Secondly, I see that in this the Spirit is asserted every where to have the chief agency, and corresponding to it is the peculiar character of Christian

baptism as distinguished from the baptism of John.

Thirdly, Because of the peculiar character of baptism as a sacrifice, by which the minister dedicates the individual to God, by virtue of his "having the ministry of reconciliation," which cannot take place without the remission of sin, and sets forward that ministry, and that power, in the words, "I baptize thee in the name, (that is, by the power and authority of) the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." And to use the words of a most admirable author, Bishop Nicholson, on the Catechism, which book I would were in the hands of all our clergy and all our laity, "These words are retained that we may know that what the minister doth, he doth not himself, or from himself, as of his own head, but by commission, command, and good authority, even by the authority of the whole Trinity. *And, therefore, what he doth is of the same validity as if God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, should baptize, since it is in their name, their authority, their power.*"

The plain meaning of the form cannot be mistaken as implying remission of sins, by an offering and sacrificial dedication on the part of the clergyman.

And as a support to this fact is another, that in the Church it was long the only form of ordination, "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God, now committed to thee by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost remit, they are remitted; and whose

sins thou dost retain, they are retained." A plain allusion to the commission to baptize, as plain a one to the text, "baptism for the remission of sins." Not that the clergyman of himself has the power of remission, but as "a minister of reconciliation," of the "one baptism for the remission of sins."

And to the vilest, and worst, and wickedest who repents and professes faith in the Lord Jesus, I dare say, upon his baptism: If thy repentance be true, thy faith sincere, then by thy baptism thy sins are remitted as certainly as God has spoken. I send him not to his own feelings, not to the weak and unestablished heart of a babe in Christ, not to the faint and feeble faith that may be but as a grain of mustard seed, but to the sure fact which he cannot mistake, of the sealed covenant, to his dedication by holy baptism unto Almighty God.

Fourthly, I believe in a baptism for the remission of sins, because it is upon his part a voluntary agreement and dedication "in the name," that is, into the profession of faith, in the Father, Son, and Spirit. For he confesses there this fact, "For whosoever shall confess me before men, him also will I confess before my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. x. 32.) And "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, with *the mouth confession is made to salvation.*" A plain allusion to the confession implied, and then most fully made in baptism. And certainly there cannot be salvation without the remission of our sins.

Lastly, because the baptismal covenant, the new covenant, is a true covenant, a spiritual cove-



nant, a covenant of grace. And it is manifestly impossible to enter within it in our sins, we must leave them *at the door, the very entrance*. And, therefore, the ordinance by which we enter in must of necessity be for the remission of sins. For these reasons, in addition to the plain declaration of the scriptures, which I *must* hold to, I cannot but consent, in the plain literal sense, to the scripture declaration, the baptism of Christ is for the remission of sins.

Again, the Christian covenant, that is, the covenant into which all Christians are introduced by holy baptism, embraces in it some peculiar privileges in consequence of itself. One of the first and most important of which is, the indwelling of the Spirit. Here, again, we are met by the metaphor of the age, one class of Christians, so calling themselves, make the Spirit itself a quality, and speak of the holy and eternal Spirit of God, the third person of the blessed Trinity, as they speak of the spirit, that is, temper and influence of a people or city; another class, not so far gone in metaphor, though on their road to it, so far that when the scripture speaks of "His dwelling in us," understand by this phrase a metaphor also, we are under its influence, or our temper is modified by it; of course, the natural conclusion is, that it is external to us, and necessarily the only evidence we have of its existence, is our moral and religious feeling.

With their good leave it is not so; far different from this is the doctrine of the holy scriptures, as to the privilege of the Christian in reference to the

indwelling Spirit of God ; so it is to all men that have a conscience, for the conscience is the ear wherewith the soul of man listens to the voice of the Spirit, and what we call the suggestions of the conscience, are His voice.

But the Christian's privilege is higher still, in consequence of this *covenant* with the Almighty. That covenant is made in baptism, and the efficient agent in it is the Holy Spirit, the Comforter. And because of this, not externally, does he work upon the Christian but internally. He dwelleth in us actually and really, not in our souls only, but in our bodies also. I understand this indwelling to be a literal and personal abidance of the Holy Spirit of God in and within this our corporeal frame, and that this is the sense of the scriptures, this the feeling of the old Church undefiled, this the true and real sense of the scriptures.

What, some one will say, this is a most astonishing notion, that the Holy Spirit dwells within the person of the covenanted subject of the kingdom of God, that within the limits of his frame, the Third Person should abide—it is a manifest absurdity. Be it so. Let us look at the position of the man with reference to his own soul. You are perfectly certain that your own soul is connected with your body, yet when you go to apply the idea of locality to it, which is involved in the idea of body, what miserable absurdities do you fall into ; if you suppose the soul in every part, why then the soul must be the shape of the body, as being agreeably diffused, therefore the souls of men must

have legs, and arms, and a nose! an idea which was that of old Tutullian. When you suppose it dwelling in any particular part, then you have the soul the shape of that part; and, besides, as the body moves, you have the soul moving in the body from one part of space to another, and so forth. Of one fact only you are certain, that in some way or other within the corporeal limits of your frame, there is your immortal spirit; but when you come to examine the mode, then are you cast into doubt, absurdity, and confusion, unbounded. *Yet the soul does still abide within the body*, and every man that believes he has a soul must and does believe it. Now this is my assertion, that precisely in the same way as the soul abides in the body of any man, precisely so does the Spirit of the most holy God personally and actually dwell in the covenanted Christian's person.

We go to examine the texts that assert it. 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is in you*, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is *in you*, and therefore glorify God *in your body* and in your soul, which are God's. Now let the reader look at this passage in connexion with the previous passages; they are an argument, not against all sin, but against a particular class of sins, sins of the flesh, sins in which the body is the

instrument; and he must see, plainer than the light, that St. Paul took this *as no metaphor*, for our souls, being under the influence of the spirit, but as an actual and real indwelling, an abidance *as in a temple*, really and truly. And as the certainty of the dwelling of the Schekinah in the temple, the presence of God really and locally there, though beyond our comprehension as to how it could have been, led the old Jews to all reverence and purity as to what concerned the sanctuary, so should the same feeling exist as to the body of man.

Take any metaphor you choose, even of the highest, and the argument in its strength and fullness is destroyed; take it literally, and it remains.

1 Cor. iii. 16, Eph. ii. 21, 22. "In whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Here is the same doctrine. The material temple was for God's indwelling; the Church also universally is the interior dwelling of the Spirit in this world, in contradistinction to His outer influence upon all through the conscience; yet its being a temple was caused by the Spirit in each one indwelling. Because of the one Spirit in each, and that the Spirit of life, the "stones grow together." Within the limits of the old temple the Spirit dwelt, yet stones were dead; and now it is the life in each stone that causes the unity and the growth. Language sinks under the weight of heavenly things, and therefore we have the apparently incongruous metaphor of stones in a building,

and life in these stones. Accordingly, in 1 Peter ii. 5, we have the same metaphor—"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house."

In accordance with this we have, in Rom. viii, 9 —"Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." This is taken for granted here, and is made for the mortification of the deeds of the body; and furthermore, that there be no mistake about the actual and real indwelling of the Spirit, it is declared that—"If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you," then as a consequence to the body itself, in which the Spirit dwells—"He that raised up Jesus from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit which dwelleth in you." The whole argument of the chapter supposes that actual indwelling which, as I have stated, Paul so plainly utters in the first quoted passage. Without this it all falls to the ground.

Let a man admit this to be *a fact*, and no metaphor, and he shall see most plain reasons for fasting, for mortification of body, and self-denial in all its various forms, as enjoined in the scripture; let him deny it, and explain it away by metaphor and so forth, and all motive is gone.

Again, the same idea is made an argument against "eating in idol temples." (2 Cor. vi. 16.) "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And I will be a father unto you, and

ye shall be my sons and daughters." Here again is the same idea; the Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost, is the Spirit of adoption, he that makes us sons and daughters through the covenant. The consequence of this is, that God the Spirit dwells in Christians, and "walks in them;" therefore each individual Christian is the temple, actually and really, of God. Wherefore, then, bring into the temple of idols that mortal frame which is the tabernacle of God? The argument is complete, the idea being taken literally. As a metaphor, it sinks and loses all force.

I shall end with one or two more quotations. 1 Col. i. 19 it is said—"It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;" and, same Epistle ii. 9—"In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Of Christians it is said, Eph. iii. 19—"That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Now it is manifest, that if the Holy Spirit, who is God, makes an actual dwelling of the bodies of Christians, that living up in action to their privileges they are filled with the "fulness of God," literally and truly; if the body of Christ was formed by the spirit of God in the womb of the virgin, then the Spirit dwells in him, and the "fulness of the Godhead bodily," since his body is framed and formed of the spirit, and the nature united to that body is *God the word*. But if the fulness of God dwelling in us be a metaphor for knowledge, wisdom, and spiritual experience, which are of God, what is the other? Surely it is gone as an argument for the divinity of Christ.

I know that the doctrine contained in the above is forgotten, obliterated, clear gone out of mind—ordinary Christians have let it glide away into unreality and metaphor, still it is true. I know many will sneer and call it absurd, I cannot help this.

I shall, therefore, as to its truth and reality, give a passage from one of a different class. Here is the opinion of Novalis, or Hurdenberg, as quoted by Thomas Carlyle—the one a German mystic, the other a pantheist, or, if you please, an atheist: “Knowest thou what reverence is due to a human body, how deep a mystery? for herein the most high dwells upon earth in a human shape.” Alas, alas! that it is come to this—that the sentiment and persuasion of Paul, and Peter, and the Apostles, and the primitive Church, has so perished from what is called Christianity, that in a pantheistic atheist a nearer approach can be found to it than in ordinary Christians—that they should *take the truth* for a metaphor, and be the atheist for a high and fruitful reality.

But if the doctrine be true, what new motives does it furnish to the Christian? Let the reader just look back to the passages quoted by St. Paul, and he shall see. There is, no doubt, in human nature a two-fold tendency; there are feelings, and those of the highest of our nature, by which purity, personally and actually, is encouraged, and this of all kinds of personal purity, from the highest to the lowest; so that from this peculiar class of feelings there is no doubt that even personal cleanliness has a high moral and religious tendency—

the very act of washing has a moral influence upon the body.

Again, there is no doubt that a low, and base, and sensual feeling as to our human nature and our human body, is one of the very first incentives to sin; this, in its further advance, develops itself in coarseness and filthiness of language, debasing still more the mind, and the next ready step is actual sin. Now every one can see this in himself, he can see that the idea of purity and delicacy attached to our person is a high preservative of morality—the contrary idea, just the contrary. These two are instincts of our nature.

Consider then how these natural feelings are supported the one, and suppressed the other, by the doctrine above mentioned; a strong motive this to believe that the doctrine as it stands is true, since the same God that made man's nature also made the holy scriptures. 'Christians,' says St. Paul, 'the Spirit of *holiness* and *purity* dwells in you, making your mortal frame a temple to himself;' how can you then defile the temple of him who is God dwelling in you? how can you the temple of God enter within the temple of demons? Must you not daily and hourly watch over yourselves, and mortify the inclinations of your natural body, which is now sanctified by his indwelling? Every one can see the effect of the truth as realized by such an one as Paul.

Again, as to calmness, quietness, and peace, look at it. If our bodies be the temple of the Spirit, shall we have recourse to vehement strug-



gles of the mind and imagination that we may realize the gifts of the Spirit? if the Spirit *were without us*, no doubt we should; if only when we felt peculiar and extraordinary religious emotions, then were we under his influence, no doubt our business were to employ all external means for ever to seek him without us. But we can be free from this struggle, for believing that the Spirit of glory and God resteth upon us, "we ascend not up to heaven to bring Christ down from above, we descend not into the deep to bring him again from the dead, for the word is nigh us, even in our mouth and in our heart, the word of faith;" and, therefore, not to extraordinary emotions or to intense awakenings of conscience, but to calm abidance in well-doing, to the sanctification of the body and soul, which are his, do we trust. And not only when we are employed in religious worship, in prayer or in meditation; but when we are upon our daily business, when we eat, when we sleep, then is the spirit dwelling in his temple, ever abiding, ever sanctifying. Let man think upon this; how high, how lofty a position is this, how suitable to transform into the Godlike and divine in us all that which we have in common with other animals of passions, appetites and desires.

By this the wife is sacred and reverend in the eyes of the husband, and the husband in the eyes of the wife; by this our children, as the Apostle says, are holy (1 Cor. vii. 14); by this the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the

unbelieving wife by the husband ; by this the home and domestic hearth, so dear to man's heart, becomes a temple, and he and all Christian fathers thus are "a royal priesthood" within that temple-home ; by this even the bread that we eat, the Christian meal, sanctified by prayer and thanksgiving, is sacramental.

But men have lost the doctrine, the sentiment, therefore, has perished and cannot be realized, and we see the fruits around us. The men of old had it, the doctrine and the sentiment, and we see what a difference it makes.

This leads us to the fourth privilege of the Christian in covenant with God, the promise of sufficient grace. What is meant by grace? Persons say such and such a man is a subject of grace, when he begins to feel strongly on the subject of religion. This is limiting it to consciousness and the feelings. It is not so: grace is the peculiar influence upon man of the Spirit, this is what we know of it; it is compared to the oil of the lamp, to the life in man. In the whole scriptures through, it is *no fitful influence*, no influence that operates at random, or by sudden starts; the Christian has it at all times and at all seasons, *by virtue of being in the covenant*. His natural feelings ebb and flow, his physical temperament varies, influences from without will cause joy or sadness to predominate; but for all these variations of temper and circumstances there is, if he knew it aright, a sufficient supply of the assistance of the Spirit given to him. The secret channel may pass unseen down the steep

descents of affliction and the lowly vallies of humiliation, still to the one level it arises, that of his needs and his position. "Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ;" that is, according to the measure of the Spirit, who is the gift of Christ—the Spirit divideth to every one as he will. And again, "My grace is sufficient for thee," he says to St. Paul.

Now, unto what is that grace sufficient? We answer, to the fulfilment of the law of the covenant of Christ, the law of his kingdom, of which we are subjects, the law of grace; for herein is the difference between the old covenant and the new, that the law under the old covenant was an outward thing, but the new law, to which we can be obedient, is a law in our hearts. That by the law of Moses man could not be justified, is plainly asserted in the scriptures; that not by the law of our nature, (virtue is the law of man's nature,) is also, by the experience of each man, manifest. But the law of the Spirit of Life in Jesus Christ, (Rom. viii. 10)—the royal law, (James ii. 8)—the perfect law of liberty, (James i. 25)—this is the law of God's Spirit in the heart of the covenanted Christian; and at the same time it is a law prescribing actions, and a power giving ability to perform its prescription; an inward law conforming to the outward law of God's word, a transcript, as it were, upon man's heart of his revelation. This is the sufficiency given to the Christian—a sufficiency according to his sphere to walk on in the path of his duty towards God and man, justified

by his faith in Christ, and the works, not of any law of man, or law of nature, but of the law of Christ. For justified he is by faith and by works; by faith which apprehends Christ as his king, and by works according to his royal law.

The next benefit of the Christian covenant is the reception of the body and blood of Christ, and although this be mainly given by the sacrament of the Lord's supper, still to none is it given but to those within the Christian covenant; and for so great a gift it would seem that the supernatural gift of life, the principle, as we have before explained, is the proper preparation. Baptism, therefore, is the door unto this, as to all the gifts of the Christian covenant, that entrance by which we must come in if we would reach unto it. This is an actual and real privilege, an actual and real partaking of the blood of Christ and its benefits. The atonement of Christ is hereby applied, and the temper and tone of Christ, as during his incarnation, he showed himself upon earth, implanted in us. This grace of his body and blood is truly and really the source and spring of all the Christ-like tempers in us; for as the good tree grafted upon the old stock will produce good fruit, so the human nature of our Lord is upon our human nature, as it were, truly and really ingrafted; so that we abide in Christ as "branches in the vine," as "limbs to the body," as the body to the head; and thereby the graces of his human nature, the only perfect and sinless humanity that ever has been, are propagated in us.

Another effect of this is, that thereby we arise again unto life. "Whosoever eateth my body and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." Men ordinarily believe in the doctrine of the resurrection, for Christianity has forced upon man this doctrine, so that even infidels cannot deny it. There is an infidel doctrine of the resurrection; the infidel doctrine is this—the beasts are animals, who by their organization arise not again, and men are animals, who by their organization do arise. The Christian doctrine is this, that all men arise by the *power* of Christ; the wicked even by the same power. That our Lord went down into the grave, and for this arose that by his omnipotence he should cause all men to arise. This is the plain doctrine of the scripture, and not the organization—doctrine. And then that in the good his body and blood are the seed of eternal life, whereby they arise unto life everlasting. Objections may be started to this of course; I do not meddle with them. This is the plain doctrine of the scriptures, and no where is the resurrection of any man, bad or good, in the holy scriptures attributed to organization, or to any other cause than the power of Christ's resurrection. Suffice it then for me to believe it.

Again, as a benefit of the covenant; its children are admitted to the guardianship of angels, and if obedient to the Spirit, and therefore holy, to the communion of saints. An express assertion there is of this as a privilege of the new covenant in Heb. xii. 22, 23. After speaking of Sinai—it will be

remembered that in a previously quoted passage, Sinai was typical of the old covenant—"but ye," says the apostle, "are come unto mount Sion, (that is, the new covenant,) and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to *an innumerable company of angels*, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to the *spirits of just men made perfect*;" plainly asserting the guardianship of angels as one of the privileges of individual Christians under the new covenant; plainly asserting too, that under that covenant the spirit of the righteous dead commune with our unconscious souls, take an interest in us, and are aware of our situation. And indeed, our Lord himself, in a saying of his, asserts the same: he says, "take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. xviii. 10.) From which most plainly we draw the conclusion, that each Christian has a peculiar angelic attendant allotted as minister unto him; and from the second clause, that this angel is a guardian to him in life.

The impression of the old Church was this, that *at the baptism*, then was the angelic minister allotted to him for the course of his life. Moreover, they believed that then, by the baptismal water, and by the seal of the cross then imprinted, was placed upon his brow a character perpetually remaining, which, to the angels and ministers of God walking to and fro upon the earth, was the evidence of his citizenship in the heavenly kingdom.

A motive, perhaps, that will be sneered at by those who have not heard of it before; but when I consider that the baptism, in the water, is an actual washing in Christ's blood; when I think how the blood upon the lintels of the Paschal Lamb, typical, as it is well known, of Christ's blood, was a sign to the angel that that house should be passed over; I certainly do not think the opinion in any degree an improbable one; and, candidly to speak, I consider it to be true.

And then the Christian, if of the holy and true, has communion with the spirits of just men made perfect; not a prayer arises to the throne on high, but he has a living interest in it; not one of the holy and the best, even in the remotest ends of the earth, but his spirit flows forth to their's with a secret influence and sympathy, which, although he be unconscious of it, is not the less real; and their's again returns unto him laden with blessings. The clouds that fall upon my land here may have arisen in the broad Atlantic or the far Pacific, yet here they have fallen, and here is their blessing. So the aid that comes to me in my weakness and my distress, may have come from the solemn litanies and prayers of the holy in the remotest ends of the earth.

Then our liturgic prayers, so general, as they seem to those who pray "for Colonel Jacob Jones, who has so helped the people of God," for "the dear brother who preceded me in prayer, and so fruitfully ministers to this congregation," to "convert, O Lord, the soul of Sarah Ward;" then our

prayers, that to these folks seem so general and uninteresting, assume quite a different aspect when viewed with the feeling upon us, of the communion of saints. And when we think that with the spirits of just men made perfect, we have communion, actual and true; when the thought burst upon us, that of our departed friends, we are not therefore left alone when they die, even as to locality, but that were our eyes unsealed, we should view them by us; how does it make a heaven of earth, and embalm them to us. What thoughts of love to the brother it suggests, or the sister, or the son of the departed, "they are not gone, they are not vanished; but although we see them not, still have we communion with them." The mother who was taken away from the child whom she had begun to train in the ways of God; she may have been taken away in order to train him all the better, through her spiritual influence upon his soul. The father dead may still guide the son in God's holy ways, and the love of the wife to the husband, of the husband to the wife, may still last and still endure.

And this last, (I am fond of these old Christian feelings and opinions, they have all a touch of nobleness, a tenderness of sentiment and of heart about them, which I rather like, and do not see in modern religion,) was the cause of a very prevalent sentiment among the old Christians in favor of only one marriage, of which a trace may be seen in St. Paul's advice, that a bishop should be the husband of one wife, a thing plainly absurd, if we interpret



it of only one at a time, for if he had more he could not be in Christian communion, or be qualified even for baptism.

These then are the privileges of Christian baptism as laid down in the scriptures, and of the Christian covenant, unto which baptism is the entrance. These, and not those other notions, "that baptism is a form of profession and nothing more, and that we do it only because it is a commanded ordinance." All these privileges, as the reader will have seen, are plainly asserted in the express words of scripture. All *spiritual* privileges belonging to the kingdom of heaven, not one of them proveable by any earthly arguments, or tangible to our senses in any way, but declared by the word of God, and received by faith.

Well, but you may say, I have known many baptized persons, and in none of them have I seen any evidence of these things.

Now there are two things to be answered to this. First, *What kind of baptism* were they baptized with?

At Christ's coming there was the baptism of John, "a baptism of repentance, that they should believe in him that came after," a baptism which was both of repentance and faith, as we see by this passage, and the other above cited, in which Paul asks them, "had they received the Holy Ghost since they *believed?*" implying most plainly, that those baptized with John's baptism had *faith* as well as *repentance*. Secondly, There was the Christian baptism with all these privileges. Now

what baptism do the various non-Episcopal sects preach and administer? is it not this baptism, the baptism of faith and repentance, without any thing else? Do they not in their universal doctrine declare, that it is nothing else; that it, *as baptism*, has no one of the privileges attached to it that I have specified; how am I, therefore, to expect in that which by its very terms, and the description of those that minister it, as well by the want of apostolic authority, is the baptism of John, the effects of the other? Certainly I cannot. They that make the objection, most likely make it from instances they have seen of those who had this kind of baptism.

Again, with regard to the Church and *her baptism*; of those privileges some are to be seen and employed by faith, others are in their effects only to be known as to the causes in heaven. For instance, the faithful only eat the Lord's body, and they who discern it not do not eat it, because they have not the faith which is requisite. The guardianship of angels, the communion of saints, we have no possible evidence by experience; as to them, we must go upon pure faith. Now our dissenting brethren will acknowledge that there are holy, and pious, and good men in the Episcopal Church. They have laid it down themselves as an axiom, that none are such but they that have gone through the peculiar process called conversion, and that none can be converted but they must know it. Now, of those men and women that they acknowledge pious and holy in the Church, nine

out of ten will tell you that they never went through that peculiar process, and they know they never did.

How, then, did they obtain their station? It will, I think, be a sufficient reason, that repenting of their sins, and having faith in Christ as their Saviour, they received the one baptism for the remission of sins. The principle of spiritual life was implanted in them by the Holy Ghost and by the water; they entered within the ark of God's Church; in which, "having exceeding great and precious privileges," that the Holy Ghost should dwell in them; that he should supply them with sufficient grace; that the body and blood of Christ should be received by them unto eternal life, and the resurrection at the last day; and, lastly, that they should come under the guardianship of the holy angels, and into the communion of the saints on earth and the saints in heaven. These things, methinks, should be as true founts and sources of holiness and piety, as ever I have seen at revivals or camp-meetings.

And to those who will tell me that these means fail often, or that the subjects of them fail, which prove them unreal, I say boldly, *they never fail*, except in the case of sin of such a character "as to be unto death." And as a proof of this, I will show the fact, that of the baptized who have faith to discern their privileges and their duties in the Church, that of those who, instructed by the Church, come forward to that ordinance which perfects all those privileges, and is the great test

of Christian faith—for faith in the covenant has many important differences from faith outside it—that of them there is not one fails, for twenty among the sects, who have been declared “converted.” Of this fact every Episcopal clergymen, who knows any thing of the sects, can bear sufficient witness—so that the comparison is in our favor.

We all know the way this fact is got over; the broad declaration, that the Christian man or woman, a communicant in the Church, who goes on in the path of duty as a good father, or husband, or son, mother, wife, or daughter, quietly and calmly doing his duty in the sphere where God has placed him, without talking of feelings and experience, is no Christian, forsooth.

We are content it should be so asserted; in the mean time, upon God’s ordinance, which we have approached with repentance from our sins, and faith in Christ as our Saviour, upon it and its privileges we shall rest, and the doctrines that belong to it we shall believe in, and our progress will be accordingly.

To those in our own Church who may perhaps be startled by some of these things, and who never have considered the practical use of baptism, I would just add these few words from an old author.

“I add this in the close, that baptism is of special use through a Christian’s whole life. It is but once administered, but the virtue and efficacy thereof grows not old by time.

“1st. In all thy fears and doubts look to thy

baptism and the promises of God then sealed to thee. Lay hold on them by faith, and thou mayest have actual comfort.

“2d. In all thy failings, slips, and revolts, to recover the sooner, look to thy baptism. New baptism shall not need; the covenant and seal of God stands firm and changeth not.

“3d. Renew thy repentance, renew thy faith in those blessed promises of grace sealed and secured in baptism, and then expect all good from God’s free mercies in Christ, although thy performances fall very short; though thou art an unprofitable servant.”

## CHAPTER III.

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### PART II.

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Application of the previous Chapters of Part II.—Spiritual Benefits of Infant Baptism.

WE have discussed in the previous chapters the doctrine of baptism, with a view to the question, what use is baptism in a spiritual point of view generally? that is, to all capable of baptism. We brought forward two notions, which, in our estimate, serves to blind men, being held as principles of scripture, and *not being so*; the notion that baptism is a mere declaration of faith, having in itself no privileges, and then the other, that plainly follows from the first, “that only because of its being an ordinance, and commanded, are men baptized;” we asked for the scripture proofs of these notions, and showed that none such exist; we brought forward then a list of texts plainly asserting that baptism has privileges attached to it, and from them we educed the doctrines regarding baptism.

Now if baptism has, according to these notions, no privileges, then men need not be baptized at all. For, first, there is *no command to baptize all believers*,

only an inference from practice, which we cannot prove to have been universal; and, secondly, it would be very absurd to think that Christ should command an ordinance which is of no effect only as a profession, when profession may be made in so many different ways. This, we believe, is the argument of the Society of Friends, an argument we see it is very difficult to get rid of upon the above premises.

Secondly, we showed most plainly, that if baptism be only of use as a profession, infants need not be baptized at all—every motive for baptizing them is cut away.

And in opposition to both these notions, we brought forward the idea of a covenant between God and man, as the basis of the scriptural system of a *true and real covenant*; we showed its agreement with the rest of the scriptures, its uses and advantages, and showed the relation baptism bore to it as its seal of admission. We took then the effects attributed to baptism in the scriptures, its doctrines, in other words, and showed them plainly the privileges of the covenant, and showed that to them baptism is the door of admission. Now the Christian can apply them to the case of infants for himself.

But, however, as all men may not take the trouble, we shall apply them, and let the Christian examine our applications of them. In the first place, from the very form, baptism is a dedication on the part of the minister unto God. I will ask the Christian, if under the old law the *first born* of

every animal was dedicated to God, cannot the infant, unspotted by actual sin, be dedicated unto him? If under the old law the child, the first born, was *sanctified* unto the Lord, (Exodus xiii. 12,) and because it should have been a sacrifice was redeemed, cannot we, as Christians, sanctify them to God whom "Christ, the first born among many brethren," has redeemed by his sacrifice? more especially since the apostle has declared all children of Christians to have the same privileges as the first born of Israel—"Your children are holy." Cannot these, then, much more be brought into the temple of God and dedicated to him, by him who ministers there in God's name and by God's authority? Can he not take them in his arms and bless them, for baptism *is a blessing*, and lay his hands upon them whom Christ his master took in his arms and blessed? Can he not dedicate them who are commanded not to be prevented from coming to him, when he knows that "where two or three are gathered together, there is he in the midst;" and that if this promise be true they can come to him th re present in the midst of his worshipping people in his temple? Simply considering baptism in the light of a blessing and a dedication, there is nothing to prevent its being given to children, even to babes.

And add to this, that they are free from the guilt of actual sin, that they too are redeemed by the blood of Christ, that they have immortal souls, that "as the soul of the father is mine, so is the soul of the son mine," all these things show the



propriety of the priest offering and dedicating to God the soul of that unspeaking babe.

And the parents, too, have they not the power of dedicating their children to God? If Hannah, under the old law, could *vow* her child to God, even before he was born—"If thou wilt give me a child, then will I give him to the Lord all the days of his life;" if the Nazarite could be *vowed* unto God in his infancy, and God *fulfilled that vow*, cannot the child of Christian parents be vowed and dedicated by his parents to Him?

History is full of it, the history of the Church and the bible. And so fully do I believe in that principle, that I say to Christian mothers and fathers, *vow* your children to God in his temple, *dedicate them* to him with prayer and in *baptism*, and your vow shall not fail. In the strength of your faith say unto the Eternal—"Here, in God's temple, to the Father almighty, to the Son, who has redeemed the child, here present—here present if the promise be true—do I vow and dedicate my child, by the hands of God's minister"—*and the vow shall not fail.*

And this is a thing forgotten through the want of faith at the present time, the power of a parent's vows at the time of baptism, a thing well known to those of old. And as a point of practical Christianity, no child of a faithful parent should be without the precious benefit of the parent's vow at the time of its baptism. The doctrine of the scripture allows it, God's promise is to it, the natural heart speaks in its favor.

Again, have not the prayers of the congregation, for the blessings promised, some effect, if it be true “that if two or three shall agree upon any thing, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven,” when they seek for spiritual blessings upon the babe so dedicated? Surely the Father almighty *can* answer these prayers, and direct the stream of providence upon the babe, so “that all things shall work together for its good; surely the Son, who hath redeemed it, *can* apply his redeeming blood to it; surely he “who sanctified the Baptist from his mother’s womb,” the Holy Spirit, can sanctify babes as well as men; surely thy strong faith shall bind the whole Trinity to that helpless babe who, being a babe, hath no means of access to the teachings of men, yet, being an immortal soul, is capable of the providential interposition of the Almighty Father, the redemption wrought out by the Almighty Son, the influences of the Holy and Almighty, who can sanctify even the unborn.

And so dedicated, so vowed, the parent shall look upon the child as such, and in faith rejoice in the vow and dedication; for, as the psalmist says, “Thou art the God that performest the vow.”

And, again, are not children capable of the covenant? They were circumcised under the old law, and members of the covenant. Yes, men say, but this was a Jewish ordinance. Well, it was an ordinance appointed by God for the Jews, certainly; but still an actual and real covenant between God and man, binding God as well as

man. And if God, by a covenant, can be bound to a babe, without the babe knowing any thing of it, surely he can be bound now, if the Christian covenant be a true covenant. But circumcision was a natural thing: well, we are declared to "have a circumcision too," though not made with hands; we are declared also to be a "holy nation," by St. Peter.

But the old covenant concerned temporal things *only*: so it did, and yet circumcision is declared to be the "seal of the righteousness which is by faith."

Well, but children are not capable of the covenant of Christianity, for they have not faith, they have not repentance: they have not repentance, for they have not committed actual sin—repentance is sorrow for actual sin. Now the qualities that make sin an impediment to a covenant with God are two, the guilt, and the stain of actual sin; having not sinned actually, they have neither. Is not their freedom from actual guilt, and freedom from actual stain, a better qualification than sorrow for them?

They have not faith: surely they have not, but the prayer of others is efficient to the remission of sins, actual as well as original.

So, then, we have babes free from actual sin, and therefore needing no repentance; we have faith sufficient for the pardon of sin, even in others; we have it, the evidence of things unseen, the substance of things hoped for, and that by the scriptures, to others as well as ourselves. Shall it not

confer upon the babe, who is free from "guilt" and "stain," the unseen and spiritual blessings of the covenant? Shall it not substantiate the hopes, supported by prayers, of them who dedicate it? Surely, if there be any power in faith or prayer, it shall.

But others undertake promises for them, that they shall do so and so—is not this a thing absurd? Not at all, when we consider ourselves under the law of God; under the law of man the same thing is done daily, as we see mortgages and bonds in the name of children; not at all, when we consider the effects of a vow, and that to it, made in faith by the parents, the disposition to fulfil the engagement taken by the parent in the name of the child, is given; not at all, when we consider Almighty God as the disposer of all events, and the Almighty Spirit as the sanctifier of the hearts, as well of babes as of full grown men.

Nor is it contrary to the holy scriptures in other parts. Moses bound by covenant the little ones as well as their fathers to enter into covenant with the Lord their God, and "into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day," not the covenant of circumcision, for they had been circumcised before, but the vow to act and do according to the words of God's law. (Deut. xxix. 11, xxxi. 10—13.) Jehosaphat brought up to his fast all Israel, with their wives and their children. And the people of Nineveh proclaimed a fast, from the greatest to the least. (Jonah iii. 5.) Surely then, if these things are so, and faith is what it is asserted

to be, the father, or mother, or sponsor, *can* justly engage for the children, and trust in God for the fulfilment.

Of course, we cannot engage for those who wilfully cast the covenant behind them, who do despite to the Spirit of God. We know that there are and will be apostates, yet, too, we know that those apostates are such *in despite* of the means of grace. Certainly it is folly to abstain from using the means because we fear men may be such. Christ knew that Judas would be, or was a devil. *He chose*; are we to *exclude* infants free from actual sin, because one of them may be a Judas? Surely experience has shown us that adults, as Judas, are just as likely as infants to fall. Shall we exclude infants, therefore, all of them?

But, lastly, a great argument to our introducing infants into the covenant is, that in the covenant are given the means of grace for fulfilling its conditions, aids and assistances which *they have not outside* it. This is plainly laid down in the past chapter, and in the following part of this I shall show that of all these aids and helps, there is not one of which infants, even the babe of a day old, is not capable. In the mean time, I refer backward to the last chapter, or onward to the next, and I ask the Christian, are not all these privileges spiritually attached to baptism and the covenant, aids to fulfil its conditions, and all possible to children?

These, then, are the reasons why we consider children capable of the covenant: Because, under

the old law, they were capable of a covenant *binding God to them*; because, this was a covenant of promise, and they were capable of the promises; because, they have in the case of repentance a better title, in the case of faith as good as adults; because, it is in accordance with the nature of faith, and the nature of vows to God, that men should promise to God for another, although he be unconscious of it, and God, as he has shown, will bring it about—and this binding the unconscious to an oath and engaging for them, is a thing of which we have brought instances; and because the same motive (which I must call an evidence of weak faith, or rather no faith) that would induce us to reject all infants, because they may, in the course of life, fall away, would also induce us to reject all adults.

And because, within and by the covenant and its seal, are given aids to fulfil its conditions, which are not to be had by those outside. He that will consider these things, and put by them the nature of a covenant as binding both parties, the person and the Almighty, and the nature of faith, he who looks at these things, must conclude that the children of Christians are capable of the covenant.

But, besides this, in the book of the Acts, children are expressly offered the covenant of baptism. Peter said—“Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost. *For the promise is to you and your children.*” A text which plainly holds out to the children the cove-

nant—the covenant promised by the prophets—as one to *themselves and their children*, and baptism as its seal, as applicable to babes as to men.

“*The promise is to you and to your children*,” the promise of a *new covenant*; you are Jews, and both *you and your children* are promised it. Therefore says Peter—“Since it *is to you and them*, we shall admit you and keep them out, and baptize every one excepting them, although in our discourse we have said nothing about it!” The discourse of Peter, considering that the promise was that of a new covenant, considering that they were Jews whom he addressed, certainly does not look very like that of a Baptist, nor very likely to be mistaken; and when we couple it with the fact before, that these infants are *not* forbidden to be baptized, in the scripture, that therein there is *no such estimation of it* to be found, and *no such warnings against it* given, as we meet with in the sermon of every Baptist preacher at the present day, surely we must conclude that Peter held children capable of it; and that they and their children were capable of the “covenant,” they and their children to be baptized in it.

Then, again, it is said that the children of believers are holy. “The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband, else were your children unclean, but now they are holy.” (1 Cor. vii. 14.) Holy, not positively, for no one that is born is actually holy; “unclean” is used in the holy scriptures as unsuitable for admission within the

covenant, and “holy” for that which is suited thereto. And why, upon what principle? Upon this, that “husband and wife are one flesh”—a principle literally taken by all nations in the laws of marriage, and literally acted upon. The one flesh, cannot, therefore, at the same time be holy, or suited for the covenant with God, and unholy, or unsuited; hence the offspring must be, by the very principle, suited for the covenant.

I say not a word to those who say holy means legitimate, and unholy, illegitimate; such meanings are not to be found for the words in the scriptures. They are the mere explanations of those who would maintain a cause at all hazards, coupled with a profound ignorance of the sacredness and the mysteriousness of marriage, as an institution of Almighty God whereby, through his power, and creative and dispositive influence, they that *have been two* become actually, and really, and indissolubly *one*. If this be admitted, and realized, and held as a fact and truth, then the Apostle’s argument follows; if it be no fact, but a metaphor, why then you may interpret it any way you please.

But one thing is certain—if “unclean” in the children mean that they are bastards, and “holy” that they are legitimate, “holy” or “unholy” *must* have the same meaning in the case of the husband or the wife. And then we have the apostle declaring that the validity of marriage depends upon “belief,” or “faith”—a most strange and outrageous doctrine to be attributed to the apostle, and most contradictory to the whole of the scriptures.



Children, then, in this passage are declared capable of admission into the covenant, clearly and plainly. And so, beside the argument for it on the ground of reason, we have the express declaration of holy writ.

We go on to the next part of this argument. That is, there is nothing in the condition of infancy to forbid them *attaining all the privileges* of the covenant, and *being benefited by them all*.

The first, the initial privilege of all, is the remission of sins. Now, what sins are to be remitted in infants? None actual. What follows from this? Is it that they should be excluded from the covenant with God? Certainly not. Else being excluded, they would actually be punished by separation from the other privileges of the covenant.

What, therefore, is baptism in their case, considered as a rite for the remission of sins? This may be seen by the nature of sin. What, then, is sin? This, neither more nor less—the transgression of the law, this is actual sin. And how does this come, how comes it, that since the “law is holy, and just, and true;” “since virtue,” or conduct in obedience to the law of God, “is the law of man’s nature,” that men transgress the law, for that law is evidently in accordance with man’s best interests? Certainly it is not by the bondage of an iron fate predestinating us to be sinful, as certainly it is not the force of external circumstances driving us onward and impelling us to sin; for every man

knows, by the fact that he is a man, *that man is the lord of circumstances*. How then does it come? By this, that there is a moral inability to keep God's law perfectly; an inability born with, and which we clearly see *not* to have belonged to man's nature originally, but to have been *the result of a deterioration*, which is called the Fall.

This inability is in the infant; it develops itself in him just so soon as reason and responsibility begin to develop themselves. And the great end of remission, of forgiveness, of reconciliation, is the putting an end to this inability in *actual transgression and in its own guiltiness*. The fact of the inability and the fact of its origin, every one can see from his own nature.

The nature of sin we do not clearly know in this world; even our deepest imaginings cannot penetrate it. The very consideration of it is involved in the deepest mystery. It would seem that there is a hideousness and horror about it more fearful than we can imagine, when we think that for its remission and pardon the eternal word must take flesh and be born, suffer, die, and be buried, that it should be remitted; it would seem too, that if we only could comprehend it, that it is an *actual and real death*, of which the death of this world is only the shadow. It would seem also to be of the nature of an infection, reaching from generation to generation, and from father to son, extending as a disease, loathsome of itself in the eyes of God. It would seem also as if it tainted

the nature of all men, as unquestionably the nature of poisonous or venomous animals, although undeveloped, still is in their offspring. It would appear also, that there is some impenetrable and happier connexion, as it were, between the souls of all men, between our souls and the souls of all our progenitors, and by consequence with the soul of him in whom the deterioration took place. And, lastly, it is plainly manifest from the scripture, that this world is a world of evil, in which we are all born subjects to this evil taint. "We were by nature children of wrath." (Eph. ii. 3.) "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. v. 12.) So, from all these considerations, would it seem that this natural inability requires remission. This sinfulness which is in us by birth, must be pardoned.

This is called *original sin*. I need not say that the explanation of it is difficult; from the first, that we, as men, born to sin, cannot understand what sin is clearly in this life, or how it looks in the eyes of a most holy God. Only this I will say, that any other opinion than this of original sin, must and will force us into difficulties and contradictions, overthrowing the whole plan of salvation. And any Christian that looks inward upon his own nature, and sees with a due estimate of its mysteriousness the nature of sin, and then looks upon a God most holy and most pure, must come to the conclusion, that "original sin" both exists and needs pardon

from Almighty God in each individual; that is, the application of the blood of Christ.

When we speak of pardon of sin, we are too apt to imagine to ourselves an earthly pardon, *wherein mere words convey the pardon*. When we speak of forgiveness, we fall into the same error, for earthly forgiveness is for the most part gratuitous; when we say remission, it is the same thing. These convey to us an idea or notion of what we cannot fully comprehend, on account of our dim-sightedness. The truth is, that what we count metaphor more fully conveys the truth than these abstract phrases. The "blood of Christ cleanses us from sin;" cannot infants be cleansed by the blood of Christ? "He has redeemed us;" cannot infants be redeemed? "He is the Saviour of men;" cannot infants be saved? "He gave his life a ransom for many;" can they not be ransomed? "He reconciled men to himself;" cannot they be reconciled? The men who object to the doctrine of original sin, and the necessity of its remission to infants, will admit all these as applicable to infants; and yet they are all identical with "remission of sin."

But it may more plainly be seen by another consideration. Forgiveness of sin necessarily implies in the sin two things—the guilt to be pardoned—the stain upon the moral nature to be wiped off. It implies both these to be taken out of the sight of God, as both are offensive in his sight, both incapacitate for the enjoyment of happiness. In forgive-

ness both these come in. Now, although actual guilt and actual stain be not in infants, still there is a stain of nature, and this may be blotted out, this may be cleansed, this may be washed in Christ's blood. And this being remitted or blotted out, the term remission is truly and really applied to infants who have not committed actual sin.

Infants then are baptized for the remission of original sin, that they may be washed in the blood of Christ, that being born the children of wrath, they may be made the children of grace. If they are not capable of this, are they capable of salvation? For surely every one will acknowledge they have been redeemed. Now if they have no sin, actual or original, how can they be redeemed? I conclude, therefore, that to infants, baptism which is for the remission of sin, can be applied by reason of original sin, which is the *speck* and *stain* of human nature.

Let us look then to regeneration; the being born of water and the Spirit. And keeping clearly in our mind that it consists of two parts, *the implanting* in us of a *principle of life*, which is not in us by nature, and *the being introduced into the kingdom of Christ*, which is the world of that birth, the sphere wherein alone the spiritual life can come to perfection in actual and real prosperity; let us inquire, how an infant is incapable of these two privileges. Is there any text that says they are incapable of it? is there any text that says "that infants *cannot* be born of water and the Spirit?" Is there any text that says this? We say with the

Church in all ages they can—let the passage be brought forward that says they cannot.

There is too a text that says, “except *one* (mistranslated a man,) be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” How plain is it, that they who exclude infants shut them out from God’s kingdom.

The Spirit is the agent in the new birth, the almighty and eternal Spirit; he formed a body for Christ; he sanctified John from his mother’s womb. Men assert that infants cannot *be born of him*: how great a contradiction is this, that the Almighty Spirit the Sanctifier, cannot work his miraculous effects upon a human spirit at any time and at any age, and this when there is no resistance; for the spirit of an adult can resist God’s Spirit, but the spirit of the babe cannot; and this too, when the spirit of the babe is free from the guilt of actual sin; so free, that *they* must become like it, who would prepare themselves to enter into that kingdom. The assertion of an impossibility in infants because of their infancy, to “be born of water and the Spirit,” not only has no foundation in the scriptures, but is contrary to all we know from experience and from the scriptures, of the moral state and spiritual condition of the infant.

And when we look at the two parts of this heavenly birth, we find in neither of them any natural impossibility, nothing in the condition of an infant that should prevent either of them from being wrought in him. The spiritual life, as I have explained, is a principle not of us, but of the Spirit

dwelling in us ; it is a *life*, and similar to our bodily life. The bodily life is not absent, *because we cannot discern it by our senses* ; it is present in sickness and disease, although these are antagonist influences ; it is that which overcomes them, and medicine cures not disease, only removes the obstacles to the working of the life in our bodies ; it is present when we are unconscious of it, as in infants ; when we are asleep, as full grown ; unseen itself and undiscernible, it shows itself only by its working. The feelings of the body may be lowered by disease, still the life is there, and it is it that overcomes disease in the body.

Just so, if there be a life of God, are its operations in the souls of men. It is a permanent possession, a life ; when implanted it is not away, because we cannot see it ; it is present, an antagonist principle in us to the life of this world that abides in our flesh. Prayer, the means of grace, meditation, faith, these are to it what medicines are to the natural body in the case of disease, not means of producing it, for it is the sole gift of the Holy Ghost, the giver of life, but means of removing obstacles out of its way. It dwells with us when unconscious, when asleep, unseen itself and indiscernible, its workings manifest it.

Now let him who has read this character of the life of God in man, let him compare it with the various passages in the scriptures describing the "life of God in the soul of man," and he shall see how exactly they answer to it. Let him compare it with this one passage, "the wind bloweth where

it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

Now look at the infant—we will say unbaptized and unregenerate ; is there not an evil principle in his nature, whose root and source is original sin, that springs up in actual sin ; which puts forth first the germ, then the stalk, the leaves and the branches ? Surely there is. We see in the child that the falling into evil is no sudden start, but a development, a growth.

How unjust would it be, that there should be no stop to this until adult years, no counteracting power *internally*. Unjust it would, and unnatural. But the life of God is the healing and antagonist power, even in the baptized infant. The same privilege that our infant Saviour had, that same privilege have our infants. “As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given the Son to have life in himself.” Was there any time of manhood, or youth, or infancy, when this gift was given, or rather had not Christ, the man-God, this life in himself as God-man in infancy, at birth ? Surely he had. What then hinders us who have *the life of him*, to have it in infancy by his appointed means ? Furthermore, this life is a hidden life—“our life is hid with Christ in God.” Should not this be a strong reason against asserting that infants cannot have this life, *because we see it not* ?

But we may look at the absurdity of the denial a little further. Infants can be born into the world, but they cannot, because *they are infants*, be born of



God, the Holy Ghost, "the Lord and Giver of life," although that Spirit is almighty, nay, although Christ is "the light that lighteneth *all that come into the world.*"

Now we plainly assert, that "if the life of Christ" be a true and real life, and not a metaphor, then by the very situation and position of infants, they are more capable of it than adults.

With regard to the second part of the new birth, as we have above said, the very fact of *a life* implies a sphere in which to exist; the natural life implies a natural sphere of existence for the life to develop itself in; so does the life of sin, a natural sphere of evil, which is what is called the world; and the life of God a sphere of existence, which is the Church, the covenanted body, the family, the people of God. We have shown that infants are capable of admission into the covenant. Let the Christian look at the means of grace provided for all, at the care of fathers and mothers who are of the household of faith, the teaching and catechizing, the training given therein, the general feeling there is all throughout the Church of the preciousness of the infant soul, and he will see that this is the sphere of life, as far as actual means are concerned. All these means take it for granted, that the life dwells therein, and are founded upon that supposition.

Let him look then at the other spiritual privileges of the covenant. The indwelling of the Spirit in the body and soul of the believer—is aught of

man's devices more fit than this to maintain the purity of childhood? The gift of sufficient grace; needs not the infant or the growing youth this gift to maintain the life of Christ in him? The indwelling of Christ, who is the resurrection and the life; is not this a gift for the two months' babe as well as for the full grown man? And, lastly, the guardianship of holy angels promised to the little ones of Christ's flock; is not this a privilege of the covenant most suitable to the tender babe? Are not all these most needful in the space that intervenes between birth and the time when man can be conscious of, and realize his privileges for the infant, the child, the growing youth? Are not these things *privileges* and *mercies* in the sphere of life, for the life? and the existence of these in that sphere, and their needfulness, an argument to us, that the life can be implanted in the infant, and that it can live and abide therein?

To sum up the whole, there is no where in the holy scripture any text that denies to the infant any of the privileges of baptism expressly attached to it in the scriptures. There is not in the nature of the infant any incapacity for any of them, nay, in the case of the most of them, they are most appropriate and most needful, just as appropriate as to the full grown man, and more needful and suitable to the babe. That is, if these be real spiritual blessings needing the eye of faith to realize them.

But if baptism have no privileges attached to it, and the covenant no privileges, if baptism be a

mere form, why then these are nothing to the infant, *or to any one else* ; and all we can do is to wait till the babe becomes a man, till he has passed through the sins of childhood and of youth, and then the grace of God may convert him. I deny not that it may be so.

## CHAPTER IV.

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### PART II.

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#### The Moral and Religious Effects of Infant Baptism.

IN our last chapter we discussed the spiritual effects of Infant Baptism, and examined the capacity of infants for it. In this chapter we shall examine the moral and religious effects of it, that is, the practical effects of it. In the former we spoke of the causes; in this we shall confine ourselves to these causes in their actual operation. This may be divided into two classes, as regards the children, and as regards the parents.

Now, as the deficiency of the mode in which this subject has hitherto been examined consists mainly in this, that the relation of this sacrament to the nature of man has not been made a topic in the investigation at all, but men have confined themselves to a dry and fruitless discussion of texts and words; we shall be plainly excused when we put forward, as a preparation to this chapter, some considerations of the principle in our nature to which this sacrament corresponds, and which it is suited to draw forth and bring to perfection.

*“Man is, at all times, a moral and religious being.”*

We say that he has a capacity for religion and religious ideas, from the very moment his mind awakens. We fear not to say this.

Now, Christianity being that outwardly which alone can bring to perfection and satisfy these moral elements in man, Christianity ought to be a thing for the child, for the boy, for the youth, for the young man. And on the Baptist theory, is it so? Certainly, we say, in practice it is not; as witness the undeniable fact that the mass of men that unite with Baptist churches, so called, are adults. Can it be so made upon their theory? It certainly seems not. And why not? Because Christianity, to be effectual upon the individual, must not only be a fact, true, and believed in, and felt, but also applied to the individual, and laid hold on by him. Now, this being universally allowed, and “conversion” being, in their notion, the means of “applying it,” and “laying hold on it,” we ask, is it not a fact, that in general “conversion” is for the “adult;” that of children this process cannot, in the majority of cases certainly does not, take place so early as the child sins, is not a process for infancy or childhood?

Now what is the condition of the father and the mother in such a case? The father and the mother, they are converted according to the ordinary doctrines; being so, they are called “children of the adoption, members of Christ, and heirs of the promises.” And what are their children? Surely,

according to their notion, they are not this, they must be "converted" before they are.

Well, let them try to have them "converted;" let them try to have them go through the same process they themselves have gone through, and the result is *practically* a despair of its possibility. The guilelessness, the feebleness, the inexcitability of the infant mind render the process, in the most of cases, an impossible one. It cannot be done.

What then next? To teach the child Christianity—*an historical Christianity!* how Christ was born, and died, eighteen hundred years ago, in Palestine, which is not New-York; and then with the deadening fact ever before their mind, that a realization and a self-application is *absolutely necessary* for Christianity, and that in the case of the child that cannot be; to go on telling the facts of Christ's life and death to try to get up its feelings, as we should get up feelings concerning any other good man's suffering. This is the doom of the parent.

Now what is this—when we teach "historical Christianity" without any self-application or realization, and the morality of the Gospel without a foundation of faith, merely upon the foundation of the natural moral sense of man—what is this religion? It is merely and entirely Unitarianism.

The Unitarianism of the present day is too narrow a basis of doubt, it doubts too little. They assert Christ not to be God; we must have the privilege of absolute doubt, of doubting their nega-

tive, since others deny it. And but for this fact, the natural result of this religious training would be as it was with the Puritan Unitarianism; as it is, it is a wider system, the system of non-professorism. The religious training of children by pious parents, *without Infant Baptism*, is a preparation for this. I have heard them wonder it should be so—it is no wonder at all.

Now, can it be otherwise? It can. Let us look at the religious feeling which, as I have said, exists at the earliest period when reason awakens. It is always attended by another, “the sense of responsibility;” and yet another, the “sense of position.”

Man ever feels responsibility, in whatever position he is placed, ever feels the effects of “position.” Let him be, as far as he can be, “freed,” and what is the effect? He sinks, morally and mentally. Let responsibilities be placed upon him, and he rises adequate to emergencies, able to bear loads that he would have been otherwise unequal to bear. This is a fact of universal human nature, of babes as well as of men.

Let men weigh it well, and upon it they will find all nobleness and loftiness of action and of thought to rest. Let a man have no confidence in his children; let him ever fear them; let him never trust the management of money or of business to their care, and what is the result? Why it is this, that they become irresolute in habit, mean, imbecile, extravagant. This is a known result. Let them, on the contrary, feel they are trusted, they

become trustworthy ; let them have little matters of business committed them, they become capable of greater ; let him be generous and kind-hearted to them, they never try to escape his eye by mean trickery ; let them feel that he not only feeds them because he cannot help it, but that even in expenditures they have a responsibility, and they are careful and prudent. Responsibility is an element of the human mind, a moral element, at all periods of our existence.

Not only this, but it *can be placed upon us*, and that to a great extent ; and it is not unjust, provided it does not exceed the capabilities of our nature. We see it done daily ; and the way it is done is, by putting us in such a position that there is no escaping. Look at all moral training, all education, it all depends upon this ; the placing of man, *by others*, in such a position that he cannot escape from taking up, of his own free will, responsibilities connected with it, and acting upon them—for man will escape if he can.

Now to me, this notion of “conversion,” applicable as it is mainly to adults, looks very like the setting the child, for a certain portion of life, *free from religious responsibility*. For, we ask, upon this notion, is the unconverted child a Christian ? Certainly not. Now Christians, as such, must have responsibilities *peculiarly Christian*, coming from the fact of their Christianity. Is not the child free from them ? Undoubtedly. Nay, we may imagine the child asking—“Mother, am I a Christian ?” and being answered “no,” he argues, “Mother



must go to church, because she is a Christian; I need not, for I am not a Christian—and it is very tiresome; mother must do so and so, but I am no Christian.” It requires no very great stretch of the imagination to imagine this; whether it has taken place or not we do not know; but certain it is that this feeling must and does arise in the minds of adult non-professors, and every one that has had much intercourse with them has seen it.

Now let us take the duties and the responsibilities peculiarly Christian, and let us know which of them is unsuited and unfitting to the infant mind, to the child, and the youth. Certainly none. If prayer, and praise, and love, and faith, and obedience to God, and the outward services of religion, be Christian duties, they are duties for the child; nay, duties to which his nature, uncorrupted by the world, unalloyed by the passions, is more fitted than ours are.

But this notion puts him in *no position for these*, it gives him the liberty of escape, and he does escape. It is in vain to say that the authority of parents, custom, habit, the beauty and suitableness of them, will compel him; they are *Christian duties*, and the true and proper position in which alone he will be *compelled freely* to feel the responsibility, is that he *be a Christian*, in *as true and real a sense* as his parents are. The principle itself of our nature shows this.

Now taking this as a fact, that Christianity is for all ages; that the human mind, as a foundation of its moral powers, has the sense of responsibility;

that to place and impose upon others, over whom we have natural authority, responsibility, is just and right, I do not and cannot see how we can avoid the conclusion that infant baptism is according to the moral nature of man; that the parents *have a right* to place their child in covenant with God, provided the demands of that covenant do not transcend his nature, as they do not, and so placed, they have a right to urge his position upon him as a motive to action upon his responsibilities.

To be sure, if baptism be nothing, if instead of its being a reality, and the covenant a reality, it is a form merely, then he is *in no position* other than before, and under *no responsibilities* more than before; if there be no aids to him more than before, why then there is no change in position. But if the covenant between God and man be a true covenant, binding upon both parties; if gifts and graces are given in it, then let him look to man's nature, and it corresponds with the facts asserted as to baptism and the covenant in the holy scriptures. The child may be made a Christian by baptism; may act upon it, and grow up in it, and have its motives kept before him by parents, and recognize these motives and responsibilities from earliest years.

I tell not dissenters for this to baptize their children, for with them baptism is that of "faith and repentance solely," the "baptism of John;" I tell them not because of this to baptize them, because, having only the notion of John's baptism, and believing that a further process, called "con-

version," is that which makes the Christian, their baptism of infants, not taking the true ground, must be a thing inconsistent. But because of this I do say, that the true Christian baptism, the baptism *for remission of sins*, wherein the child "is born again of water and the Spirit," is most in accordance with the principles of our nature; is that whereby alone Christianity is made an institution and a privilege for all ages.

Now let us take the parent and the child; we have shown the position of the parent and the child under the other system, look at their position under this. Consider the parent with the fixed thought upon his mind, that as he is *in covenant* with God, so is the child; that as he is *a Christian*, so is his babe; that as *in him the Holy Spirit dwells*, so in the child; that as to him *sufficient grace is given*, so to the child; that as he is under the *guardianship of angels*, so his child. Let him have these thoughts—and men *have had them*, and *have acted* upon them—and how much does it add to the relation of child and father; it makes it at once one of the loftiest and noblest thoughts, and brightest hopes. And side by side with the expansion of the child's intellect as to the relation between him and his earthly father, it places his knowledge with regard to his heavenly one; and to every act of religion which the father places upon the child, it assigns at once a reason of position in the relation of the child.

He may not at first understand it clearly, as he does not understand how his father is his father,

and being such, has power over him. But just as soon as he knows what "Christian" means, just so soon the moral sense attaches the feeling of responsibility to the word; and the evidence of those whom he *must believe*, his father and his mother, to the effect that *he is a Christian*, compels him to feel that he must take up these responsibilities, and *he will do it*; and the gifts and graces given in true baptism, these will sustain him. And so from day to day the child will grow in grace, and never, at any one period of life, be enabled to remember the time when first he learned that God was his Father, and Christ his Redeemer; never be able to trace in his heart and soul the beginning of his faith and hope; and Christianity will be a thing not put on with an effort, and walked in with an effort, but one that has grown with his growth, and strengthened with his strength.

Need I say that I have seen such in the Church, men and women grown, that from childhood had been Christians, who had never had as to belief any morsel of doubt; as to their own position from childhood, its duties, responsibilities, and privileges, any hesitancy, but calmly and quietly had gone on from infancy to age in a realization of these responsibilities?

I will say, that if the promises attached to baptism be true, such a Christianity as this, is the one that is most suitable to our nature, and that in effect it actually and really does surpass the other. Let one be a Christian in this way, (I speak *but for the Church*, for there are the means for it, not elsewhere,)

and there is no doubt, no fear, no hesitancy, all which cling and hold fast to him (in a greater or less degree) that has been converted in maturer years. There is, too, a greater consistency of life; a kind of saintliness and sweetness in temper and feeling, that attaches itself to them who have been Christians from infancy under the Church's teachings. I use the word "saintliness" for want of a better, to express a peculiar tone of temper that I have ever noticed in the pious in the Church whose piety dates from their Christian baptism in infancy—a quality observed by myself, and noticed by several to me.

Furthermore, with regard to feeling this has the advantage. I see the father converted with great labor and great struggle acting upon the Gospel, taking up its feelings and acting on them until they become his own. Let *him only be the Christian*, and not his child, and these feelings terminate in him; let him estimate and consider the child as a Christian, and the child think itself so to be, *and be so*, and the direct effect of this is, that from imitation, from affection, from the thousand influences by which in the home the child is moulded, the feelings of the father, his hopefulness, or his faith, or his humility, become the inheritance of the child.

I might advance still further—I might show how, upon this fact of infant baptism, all Christian education depends, and how all Christian education attempted without this for childhood must fail; but enough has been said to set the candid inquirer upon the track; enough to have suggested to him

the elements of many thoughts upon the subject, which I hope will confirm my views.

We proceed, therefore, to the moral and religious effects upon the parents. There is no doubt that there are two views in which the household may be taken—the merely physical view, and the Christian view. In the merely physical view, the house is “a certain place to shelter a woman and a man, who, for mutual advantages, are united together.” The husband is he who provides the elements of comfort, the wife she who arranges and combines them. He marries for a house-keeper, for an attendant upon his comforts, for the station of respectability given in society by marriage, for a thousand things, all which terminate in self; and she for a comfortable home, for a protector, for station, or family, or for a hundred things more, all which terminate in self: convenience, comfort, advantages merely physical, these are the motives which cause the most of marriages, these are the grounds whereupon their continuance is placed.

Yet still this is not openly avowed to one another by the parties; it is hidden from one another; only in the consciousness of the individual does it lie concealed.

And as God made man, so in man's heart there is a longing and a searching after the higher truths of his revelation; and in despite of all false theories, will the heart of man, even untaught, search out to itself some faint twinkling of the truth. And so in despite of this notion, which is the notion that most

at these days profess and act upon, the notion, I say, "that marriage is a civil contract for supply of mutual wants," in despite of this notion, which I honestly say, is my opinion, places the union of two human beings on the ground of the union of a pair of animals, permanancy being the only thing in which it differs, in despite of this which makes us *rational brutes, animals with reason*; still the heart of man will attach something of sanctity, something of holiness to the union. The husband's love towards the wife will still have something of the reverence, something of the deep feeling of veneration, something of the religious respect for the wife, which the true scripture doctrine realized as a sentiment of the heart, would give in its fulness. And the wife will still have for the husband that feeling akin to worship, which that true doctrine inspires, the highest feeling of the heart towards a created being that the man is capable of. Imperfect are these sentiments, and not clearly understood or distinctly held, since their foundation is denied; but still in some degree they will exist.

And what then, the reader may say, is the true doctrine? That plainly laid down in the scriptures, "that these two are one flesh;" that the two individuals, being *two*, are yet *one*, a man and a woman, yet one humanity—one not only in union of interest, will, affections, sympathies, for this is a figurative oneness; but one so as no other oneness is; one so, that by Christ's law, nothing save death can dis-unite them; one so, that the unbelieving wife or husband is sanctified by the believer. One as

Christ and his Church are one ; one in a mystery ; that is to say, the fact is to us impossible, yet as being revealed to us by the word of God, as confirmed too by the instinctive feeling of our nature, we receive it as the work of God, while the means whereby it is so, the grounds, the consequences of it, these lie far beyond as deep hidden in the limitless power and the inscrutable wisdom of the Eternal.

This is the Christian doctrine of marriage, and by this the union is holy and full of grace, an union which is so, whether we feel it or not, and works out its effects even upon those denying it, the feeling and modes of thinking above alluded to, even on those the most unconscious of it.

The house then of man is no lodging of a pair of rational animals, no tavern wherein the husband is a permanent boarder for the money he brings in, and the wife a permanent boarder for the work she does ; but nearer to a temple it comes, and the husband and the wife are priests of God, declaring to one another and to the world by their union the mysterious power and mysterious wisdom of the Almighty, and by their feeling produced by this fact, manifesting that there is upon the earth holiness, and reverence, and worship, and affection, independent altogether of self.

Man of sentimentality ! were it not better you took this as a plain fact, kept it in your memory, and acted upon, than delight yourself with vague luxuriances of feeling, which only in this have their reality ? Man of romance ! think you not this



a more permanent foundation for your love than the false floating notion of Thomas Moore, and Byron, and Bulwer? Men of poetry! Provencal troubadours of old, and German minnesingers, from whom, by many a channel, you drain your notions, on this founded their noblest thoughts, which to them were but the faint utterance of their deep feeling of this religious truth, and to you are "pretty poetry," and "sweet thoughts."

And as a proof of this, you may search through the ancients from Homer down to Euripides, and in none of them all will you find what we Christians call "love;" in all of them you will find what they call love, to be merely animal feeling. All the scattered nobleness of thought and feeling as to the love there may be in poetry or romance, all take their origin remotely or directly from the Christian doctrine and the Christian sentiment of marriage. Methinks it is time when we look at the enormous number of divorces, that men were standing upon the Christian doctrine again, and giving up the "boarding-house," or "mutual permanent-tavern" theory.

But this doctrine and this sentiment are the "possession of the Church." We naturally have it, and easily and unconsciously fall into it. To others, although plainly asserted in the bible, it is a "falsehood," an "absurdity," a thing "that cannot be." *It is nevertheless true.*

Now in view of this truth, let us look at the relation of the infant to the home. In view of this, and this alone, which as we have shown, our

nature yearns after and confirms, "the home is a holy place," not merely consecrated by the affections and unconsecrated when they are not present, but *of itself in itself* holy. In view of this, what the apostle said is true, "your children are holy." The marriage is holy, the home is holy, the children are holy.

Take the worst of men and they in action will recognize these facts as true; the foulest debaucher will hide his debaucheries from his family; the filthiest speaker before his wife and his children will abstain from his filthy speaking; they feel the *holiness of wife, of children, and of the home*; nay, even the heathen poet, plunged in that horrid vortex of all vice that is foul, all debauchery that is abominable, which drowned the last days of ancient Rome, could feel this of nature when he said, "maxima debetur pueris reverentia"—the deepest reverence is due to children.

Now taking these facts as truths, who is there that does not see the fact, that to the Christian parent, Christian baptism of infants is that which completes and brings to its full and thorough perfection, the relation of the parent to the child, as the same ordinance coupled with the other sacrament of Christ's body and blood, is that which fills up the relation of husband, and wife, and home. In fact, I will say, the baptism of the infant, and this alone, can establish the relation of the home in its Christian fulness.

Men will say, "O! we can feel all this without baptizing our infants, just as well as water can flow

in a channel to which there is no fountain." Men will avoid responsibilities just as much as children. By man's position he should give his children a Christian education. It is hard to give such to those that are no Christians. No Christians, say some, because they are not converted—none, say I, because they are not baptized.

Let them be baptized with *Christian baptism*, and what are the thoughts of the father? Here they are unconscious of their privileges as Christians, just as they have been a little while ago unconscious of their privileges as human beings, *yet having them*. And I and their mother have taught them these, have watched over the first glimpses of intelligence as to the outward world, and aided this consciousness as to earthly things, should I not as to heavenly things? I have been their father, and they called me father before they knew what father meant—is there aught incongruous in their being *children of God*, and calling him "*father*," before they know what that means? and is it not my duty as with regard to myself, their earthly father? I have awakened their knowledge as to the one, so do with regard to the other. They are sanctified by the Spirit all unconsciously, should not the parent draw forth this fact as a motive into their minds? They are under the guardianship of God's peculiar providence, is not this fact a ground for the parent's instruction as to faith?

Yes, I say, *faith* in children, *faith* in babes, true saving *faith*, this the parent, knowing infant baptism

as a fact, may produce unhesitating, unwavering, unshaken faith, such as man converted in maturer years possibly can have. For all Christian virtues and feeling in children, Christian baptism in its peculiar Christian meaning and power, is a means to the parent, and to himself the completion of his duty as a parent.

Let the responsibility be placed upon him, his position leads him to realize it, and he will realize it; he will feel that "children of heaven and of Christ," not merely of his own person, are entrusted to him, heirs not barely of his earthly property, but of Christ, are given him. That his house is a temple, and himself the priest of it, the delegate and representative of the Father most high.

And knowing that baptism is no empty sign, no mere form, but the work of the Almighty Father, the Almighty Son, the Almighty Spirit, he will let no thoughts of possible coincidence of adverse circumstances dismay him, no considerations of rebellious nature or unruly wills trouble him, but go on *in faith in God*, and do that duty towards them, which even his natural feelings tell him should be done; he undertakes the responsibility which, as it is not too great for him, so he has a right to undertake it, and can fulfil it.

And upon himself behold the effect. Teaching, he is taught; training, he is trained. The questions of a Christian child, coming from the heart un-hackneyed in the ways of the world, these are instructions for the greatest and the deepest-thoughted. Nay, I do believe, that as to the Chris-

tian husband, the intercourse of a Christian wife will give a tone to his piety which otherwise it could not have, so to the Christian father, the teaching of his "*Christian children*," born again of the Spirit, will communicate a great deal of that childlike spirit, which is the character, according to our Saviour, of true Christianity.

And one reason why this is wanting, why the present Christianity is so fierce, fanatical, and excited, I think to be, because Christian baptism is so rare. For under it we are a "royal priesthood." The Spirit under it speaks from the father to the child, from the child to the father, from the wife to the husband, from the husband to the wife. From all fountains of natural affection, from all sources of happiness, the Spirit too of God flows, for it takes possession of them all, and makes of them all issues of its grace.

And highly responsible and lofty will be the feeling of father and mother, knowing these things; not a grim religious home, as under the old Puritans, when the father, in truth and fact, was the representative of a God of absolute decrees of predestination to heaven and reprobation to hell, but a Christian house full of all tenderness and mutual sympathy. The child at once a child, and in Christ a brother, endowed with the same privileges, and blessed with the same Spirit. When as under the ordinance of the Spirit of God, the fruits of the Spirit prevail. "For the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness,

faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law." (Gal. v. 22, 23.)

Let them who have seen both say, whether these are the fruits of the puritanic home or of the home of the non-professors.

Men will say, we have not seen these things. Well, we say, as we have said before, there is but little Christian baptism in the land; we say too, there is but little realization or acknowledgment of the Christian doctrine, as to the family among those called professors. We say too, look at the doctrine of Christian baptism, look at the Christian doctrine of the family, and these acknowledged and realized, ever bring forth these fruits, *and we have seen them.*

And as our conclusion, we will say, from this whole chapter, "no Christianity is full and complete in the Spirit and the temper of Christ, that has not begun in childhood." No Christians that are parents are full and complete in the Spirit of our Lord, who do not give their children Christian baptism, and undertake and act upon the responsibility it imposes.

## CHAPTER V.

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### PART II.

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#### The Benefits to Society of Infant Baptism.

I NEED not say that, having shown how the ordinance of Christian baptism, truly received and truly appreciated, ennobles and exalts to the greatest possible pitch the relation of the husband to the wife, and of both to the children; having shown how its effects are the rendering Christian education a possible thing, which is now impossible; and how it produces, as its result, a tone of Christianity having truly the odor of the Spirit about it, calm and gentle and peaceable, unwavering in faith, and making its great end the works of the Gospel; having shown these things, I need not say I have shown many benefits arising from it to society.

I am not to prove these things, I only indicate them, and this is enough. For I know that there are many good and true men and women who will read this book, to whom, perhaps, at first these things will be startling, and yet who by looking over their own experience, will find many more indications of the truth of the things I have said,

than a hundred volumes such as this could supply. I know, too, that there is in this country a religious society, the Church, whose inheritance not to be taken away is the ordinance of Christian baptism ; and I know that truer and truer, more and more practical every day to her members are becoming, because of external things, the truths she maintains ; and I have seen that this sacrament, as applied to infants, is every day more felt in its power and effects among us. To the increase, then, of these two feelings I trust for the "proof," if it may be so called, of these sentiments herein expressed, and leave janglings, and disputes, and debates to those whom these things please. The bible and the nature of man, the Church of God and the world of God's providences, the home and its elements of holiness, these are advocates on my side which must be heard ; and in their increasing power, and continual emancipation from the interpretation of sect and party, will give a force to things I have herein said, which I cannot appreciate, but which I know must ultimately avail. To these advocates I have hitherto appealed, and to them I leave my cause.

I might stop here, but there is a view upon this point which, in my mind, is so important in a social point of view, that I cannot refrain from laying it before my readers. It has been seen that the doctrine of baptism supposes the conferring of privileges upon those unconscious of them, privileges which are real and true, yet of which the possessors of them have no feeling.



It will be seen that these privileges of the infant in the spiritual covenant, are analogous to the privileges of the infant citizen in the political covenant, both had, in truth and reality, by those who are unconscious of their existence, that both are just, inasmuch as they imply responsibilities to which the nature of the infant man is adequate. Every one will acknowledge, that in the case of the infant citizen these privileges would be idly conferred, but that there is an institution, the State, which trains him up to them, and educates him to both these things, to act upon them, and by action to know and feel them as his ; and also, he that shall look to the matter closely, will see that there is a certain influence that proportionates in the infant and growing citizen the responsibilities exactly to the privileges, and the capability of acting upon these privileges.

Now when we come to see what that influence is, and by what name it is to be called, we shall see at once it is "law." We shall see, too, that it is an influence from which, in the State, none can be free ; through all the institutions of society it speaks, for these are its embodiments, the magistrate, the husband, the parent, all are mouth-pieces of this eternal spirit. To all men it speaks, to all classes, and all individuals it reaches, even to the babe on its mother's knee. To the good it is the secret plastic force of society, which works upon them almost unconsciously, framing and forming them ever with a gentle and omnipresent influence, unfelt, yet not the less real ; to the bad it is a force

external and severely felt, sternly thundering out its penalties, its sanctions, its punishments, placing against them a barrier they cannot leap, and calling to its aid, even when men the most reject it, powers in man's own breast, in the feelings of his fellows, in society, and even in the elements themselves, which do and will execute its decrees.

Men have felt this, and felt there is something divine in "law;" and the loftiest and the holiest have concluded, that this that we call "law," is neither more nor less than the influence and operation of the will, and power, and justice of God.

Now this fact—which we take as a fact—is that which completes the circle of facts which, with regard to the infant and unconscious citizen, render the possession of privileges, and the consequent necessity of duties, a just one to him. 1st, There are privileges to the unconscious. 2d, There are duties and responsibilities. 3d, These duties are such as his nature is adequate to, and capable of bearing. 4th, There are positive institutions which educate him to the knowledge and the practice of these duties. And, 5th, Then there is a teacher, the "law," that, through all these institutions, speaks, and exerts an uniform formation influence.

Take away any of these conditions, and the first fact, that he is unconscious, invalidates all the rest, and places him in a wrong and unnatural position. But suppose them all to exist, as they all do, and the fact of his unconscious position has in it no absurdity, but is a most wise provision, and a defence to his rights.

Now it has been shown, that the doctrine of baptism embraces analogous facts to these, as one should imagine it ought to do, from the state of Christianity being represented as a "covenant," a "kingdom," a "nation." There is a plain assertion of privileges in the scripture, as I have shown, of which we are for the most part unconscious; there are duties and responsibilities for all ages springing from these real privileges; these duties are such as our nature is adequate to; there are positive institutions to educate to the knowledge and the acting upon these duties; and, lastly, there is, as in the world which is governed by law, a spirit, which, by means of these institutions, educates, and trains, and governs.

All these conditions are specified clearly and distinctly in the holy scriptures—in the privileges of baptism—Christian duties for all ages—the family and the Church to train, and the Holy Spirit as working through and by both. And these, fully seen and fully appreciated, make up the complete cycle of the conditions and elements of the justice of infant citizenship in the kingdom of heaven, as of infant citizenship in the state on earth. These, in their reality and truth, carry out that practice through the life, in the one case as in the other.

Now I do not say, nor do the administrators of the baptism of John pretend to say, that their baptism is a baptism of privileges, but a baptism of declaration; hence, this being wanting, all the rest is grace. The Church is not an institution, but a voluntary association. Their churches speak not

with the same voice, but with different voices; there is not, and there cannot be unity, and *spiritual law* there is not. Now this being so, it were folly to baptize children—a sheer inconsistency. Whatever arguments they may use, it is certain that if there be not *one church, one faith, one spiritual law*, the baptism of infants is a thing that does no good, but is unjust.

From these considerations it may be seen how closely connected infant baptism is with the doctrine and the reality of *one Church*; and how there must ever be, in those that have left that doctrine and practice, a tendency to deny the doctrine of infant baptism.

Having made these remarks, which tend to clear the way, we go to consider the effects of the doctrine of baptism, especially in referenc to infant baptism, upon a subject most important at the present day, the subject of *spiritual law and discipline*. We have shown how nature makes the parent an educator and a religious law-giver to the child; we have shown how the doctrine of Christian baptism (not the baptism of John) brings out and completes the natural position in Christianity of the parent; that from the nature of the home, and the relation of parent to child, this is not unjust to the child, but right. And we proceed to examine its bearing upon a great want of society at the present day, the want of a “spiritual law,” a practical, uniform law of Christianity, that shall teach the Gospel to all classes, as the “law” teaches and trains all classes in and to itself.

The institutions of this that we call Christianity, every one will admit, are divided, society against society, church against church, doctrine against doctrine; they utter not the one voice as to doctrine, or as to practice, they are not *manifold teachers* of the *one spirit*; they are opposite. True it is of all the so-called orthodox sects, they teach morality; and yet that morality is in no respect different from the morality of non-religious men; it is a morality which is partly that of negation, and partly is the mere morality of the natural feelings.

There is a Christian morality, something higher and loftier than this. We have read a good deal of the history of ancient nations, and we have no hesitation in saying, that we know not of any Christian nation yet, whose morality is at all equal to that of the Roman nation, the "plebs Romana," from the time, we will say, of the expulsion of the kings till the death of the Gracchi. We believe that the morality of Christianity has never yet been the morality of any nation, nationally, but only of individuals; that it can be, and that it will be in this our land, but is not yet; and that if it comes, it will come in no other way than this, by the production within Christianity itself of a "spiritual law," analogous to the "law" which in society has been at work so unremittingly since the revolution.

Now let us look at the present state of the religious world, as to the effect of the "law" of Christianity. Now what is the fact as to religious societies, are they institutions that exercise any such influence? Certainly not. They are volun-

tary associations, the will of the mass, this rules; their laws and rules are those of mere convenience, of mere order; they are neither *educating* nor *training* societies. There is no authority, no law in them, their ministers but seldom approach the people in the character of authority; nay, points that have been settled in the Christian Church hundreds of years ago, these are brought up again, and unsettled. Now what we say is this, that in the present Christianity there is no characteristic difference between a professor of religion and a moral non-professor; the one is as the other, save that he does sometimes wear a graver face, and is a little more set, a little more bigoted. But the main fact is this, that they differ not in morality.

One in the civilized state is differenced at once to the eye from a savage, by a thousand things in his whole being, small in themselves it may be, but still very plain and very manifest, and which to every one bear evidence of the influence of "law" upon him; so it ought to be with the Christian—so it is not.

And the difference between the savage and the civilized man is in two things—first, "self-subjection." The appetites, passions, desires, in the savage rule; and these, momentarily as they arise; the civilized man has them under subjection, "law" has trained them to the uses nature intended them for; self-restraint is a perpetual evidence of the workings of "law" upon the man of civilization. Again, "law" in the civilized man subdues the will—the man's will is not all, he may wish and

desire, but still "law" has taken his will into control, it fetters it by the will of thousands; the savage's own will is his sole motive to action.

Now I ask, wherein is the Christian at the present day *more self-denying* than the non-professor? Self-denial being the foundation of Christian morality, are not the mass of Christians just as luxurious, just as selfish, just as little subdued, as the mass of the world? Is it not a fact that the training of self-denial prescribed by our Saviour, Christ, and his apostles, under the shape of fasting, is done away with, and even scorned and flouted at? and that there is no greater evidence of it in professors than in non-professors? This, every one must admit, is a fact.

Let us look again at the law. Riches, according to the Gospel, is the root of all evil. We know how often Christ and his apostles warned against its influence; we ask, then, what power has Christianity upon the rich, or over them?

Men may say very great—I say just none at all. It is not the rich that support the Gospel, but the poor; the rich give not in proportion to their riches. Take any religious society, divide the property held by them into two parts as nearly as may be, putting on one side the two or three extreme rich who have incomes or properties equal to those of the mass together, and those of the mass upon the other side, and ten times a greater proportion comes from the mass than from these. The mechanic of five hundred dollars a year gives his ten or twenty dollars; the man of five thousand gives

his fifty—and who rule but these? It is time that there should be as much justice in religious societies as there is in mercantile companies.

Now, we will say, a rich man is divorced for other cause than adultery; he seeks to marry again—where is the ordinary clergyman who dare refuse to perform the marriage ceremony? or, if he did, where is the support that would give him, in Christianity, that protection which is given to every constable in the state in doing his duty?

Again, with regard to the discipline over the very rich, where is it? The criminal law, the law of public opinion, self-interest, will keep a man from the grosser vices; but within these limits there is a multitude of offences against the law of Christ—where is the power of the law of Christ in ordinary against these things in the exceedingly rich? Know we not that a man may do a multitude of these things, and yet, because of the competition among religious societies, especially if he be rich, he will still be able to remain? or if he goes, because he is rich, has influence, is fair and plausible, he shall be received with gladness in others? So that now, to men of the world who are shrewd in their profession, the fact of a man being a professor of religion, is no *prima facie* evidence that he does not break contracts when he can do it safely, that he does not defraud, lie, oppress the poor, and extortionate. And the richer he is the less certainty there is, for this thing we call Christianity has but little power over the rich. I speak this in sorrow, but still it must be spoken.



People are ready to rest in present evils, to bear with them, to say these things are unavoidable; certainly they are unavoidable under a Christianity that *gives no privileges, that has no unity, that is sect-  
rent*. But under a Christianity *at unity*, under a Christianity that is founded upon a *covenant real and true*, they are not unavoidable; under a Christianity that has “one faith,” and therefore *one Church*; “one baptism,” and that a “*baptism for the remission of sins*,” (Christian baptism,) these evils are conquerable.

In old Christianity, which was so, the emperor of half the world, in despite of all power and all wealth, had to bow before the “law” of Christianity as the meanest transgressor, (Theodosius.) And again in a hundred instances the same thing took place with the lords of the world. The same thing may take place again, nay, shall; but under a Christianity having these elements alone, not under the other.

We have said enough to prove that the main deficiency is the deficiency of a spiritual law.

We now shall go on to examine the influence of Christian baptism in producing this law, conformably to that text of Paul—“One Lord, one faith, one baptism;” and we plainly say that we understand it to mean neither more nor less than this, one God, one faith, (and therefore one Church) and one baptism, (for the remission of sins, that is, Christian baptism.) We will take the child first having Christian baptism; his position in a covenant having privileges, and responsibilities, in a

home which is by its nature, as defined by the scriptures, holy, under parents, we will say, baptized with the same baptism, is essentially that of one "under law." The business of his parents, to draw forth his privileges into action and duty, is essentially legal, a training in the law of Christ. Day by day, in the smallest things as well as the most important, to recognize that law, to be conscious of it, to act upon its motives, to live by its rules, these it is their business to teach him as having authority, and his business to learn.

The covenant was first with a family, and so at the present day the family is to the young citizen of the kingdom the first influence of the "law of Christ" upon him. Strictly and rigidly, in the family under Christian baptism, is he under the "law of Christ." Unity, manifestly under such a Christianity then, must be in the home, for all motives must lead the parent to confer upon all his children the "one baptism." Doctrine, and feeling, and principle, all, in him who acknowledges *this baptism*, lead him to confer it upon all.

And because of this baptism being for all ages, the Christianity that holds it must be a teaching Christianity, an authoritative Christianity, a Christianity with one faith. The Church then steps in; her prayers are teachings, (at the same time he prays, he learns.) Doctrines, which a divided Christianity disputes about, these he is certain upon from the form of his liturgy; he doubts not Christ is God, he doubts not the atonement, he doubts not eternal punishment; with the one baptism ever is

connected the "one creed," and the fact of a liturgy as the means and instruments of the one faith.

Let us then consider the motives of him under a covenant, and we shall see that they imply "law, a spiritual law," as the foundation; they actually and really produce that feeling and that opinion. Christian baptism has, as I have said, privileges, it is a covenant. Now in ordinary what is it that draws forth the feeling of law in men, in a state? This, that they have privileges; law defines, guards, protects these. Having life, having liberty, having property, these make a man feel the worth of law, these make him think upon it and uphold it.

Christian baptism confers privileges; the knowledge of this fact produces the same feeling. My sins are remitted, I have that privilege; does not the knowledge of that fact make me obedient to the law of Christ, and produce a course of action in me according to his royal law, the law of faith, and works, and charity, that may retain me in this position? I am born of the Spirit; feeling this as a fact, will I not be obedient to the law of Christ? I am within the covenant; will not this motive make me struggle to remain within it? I am a member of Christ; must I not labor and pray to make my calling and election sure? And so with regard to all the other privileges of the baptized, they are motives that directly lead forth and draw into practice the belief in a royal law of liberty, the practice of a clear and definite Christian and spiritual law.

And then, in direct bearing upon this, comes

the great fact, that a covenant with God once concluded, cannot be undone. Men talk of the unspirituality, the want of power in the Church doctrine. They know it not. Upon this the Christian can take his stand with a face to the individual, nothing else can give. This completes the practical force of the Gospel. If men are made by holy baptism members of Christ, children of God, inheritors of the kingdom of heaven—then has the minister a power for good, a moral power not to be estimated. “You are,” says the Sectarian, “by your faith, all this;” “well, my faith is lost of course—I am no longer this—no longer bound by the duties that attach themselves to these relations; what shall I do?” “Pray for faith, obtain it, and then all these privileges are assured to you again.” This is the manifest way upon the Sectarian notion. It seems very like setting the man or woman free from the responsibilities in the mean time.

Well, we take a different view, we say, “you cannot undo that which is done—you are still a child of God—rebellious by your own account, and disobedient; by remaining so, you subject yourself to the penalty—cease then sinning, and cease being disobedient—a member of Christ, take care of being an unworthy member—an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, beware of losing the inheritance.” Which is the more practical way? that which tells the more effectually every one can see. The last manifestly supposes the idea of law.

Now to these considerations I add another fact, which a great many deny, but which their position

leads them to deny, that there is and ever has been in the world one visible body, the holy Catholic Church, holding one faith, one ministry, teaching by authority, one baptism, one tone of feeling; that this Church is founded by the Holy Spirit, and has the one apostolic succession. I add this fact, for which I refer to the ordinary books upon Episcopacy, Hobart, or Kip's Double Witness of the Church, or any other of the ordinary books, and then I have the circle completed, which makes the baptism of infants a true and real instrument toward the spread of the Gospel. This, in its teachings, its educational, and legislative, and corrective capacity, completes the circle. This is ever inclusive, it tends to draw all others within it; it is holy, the privileges it confers are those spiritual ones which, in their realization, tend to holiness; its action upon the individual is such as to draw forth these privileges into consciousness as motives to holiness, and these motives to reduce to a spiritual love of holiness. It is Catholic, universal, tending to become of itself universal, to spread universally, as well as being the same in all ages and all times.

Now let us put these elements together, and we find the amount is this:—First, Christian baptism is the conferring of actual privileges. Second, These imply duties for all ages. Third, These duties are those to which nature is adequate, and therefore can be justly imposed. Fourth, These are positive institutions, the family and the Church, whose business it is to train to a knowledge of

these duties. Fifth, The Church is “one” Catholic and Apostolic—one showing the spirit of law, which is and must be one—Catholic, fitted for all natures, times, places, and persons—and Apostolic, having authority. Take any or either of these conditions away, and the baptism of infants is an absurdity; let them exist as facts, and infant baptism is right and just. And all of them are plainly asserted in the scriptures.

Ye that deny or doubt the baptism of infants, examine yourselves, and you will see that you deny or doubt some one of these five facts. These are the motives for your denial, whatsoever arguments you may use.

Now let us see how and what effect Christian baptism would have upon the state of Christianity as an universal thing. The effect would manifestly be at the very first, that all children of Christian parents would be brought under a training peculiarly Christian, a freedom from doubt, and fear, and unbelief, a habit of ruling themselves after the law of Christ from infancy, more or less perfect, according to the character and knowledge, but still practical and at unity, calm, and quiet, and determined, obedient to the law of Christ, and zealous, yet opposed to excitement and fanaticism. The generation of their fathers passes away, they come to engage in matters of religion, to be the communicants of churches; there is one spirit among them, the spirit of unity in faith and feeling; the tone of Christianity is exalted, it speaks in one law, and from generation to generation the spirit of the

fathers falls upon the children; it spreads, and once more we have "one faith, one God, one baptism," the gift of a saintliness and holiness in Christianity, such as certainly we see not now.

This is a thing not to be done by societies or by united efforts, or by any one thing but this, that each parent should give to his children Christian baptism, and act up himself to the duties that baptism imposes.





## CHAPTER I.

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### PART III.

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Causes of the Denial of Infant Baptism. 1st. Want of Faith. 2d. Predestination. 3d. The Conversion Notion. Note on Abrahamic Covenant.

WE have thus examined the doctrine of baptism as laid down in the holy scriptures. We have shown that from that doctrine as plainly as can be, the practice of the baptism of infants follows as a necessary consequence. We have shown how it accords with the nature of man. The question then follows naturally, how it comes to be denied by so large a class of men, who unquestionably are pious and devoted? This comes first in the most part of our investigation, for unquestionably the motives to any course of action are very often wholly and entirely different from the grounds upon which we defend them.

Now let the readers of this book who are in the position of the denial of baptism to infants, examine themselves as they go along with me; and the first and most manifest is, we will honestly say, a want of faith. We take the word faith as the scriptures

use it, as a supreme confidence, and unhesitating trust in the promises of the Almighty. God is almighty, eternal, omniscient, my Father, my King, my Creator, and I a man of the dust, feeble, and frail, and limited in power as in intellect; what then should be my feeling towards him? Should it not be an ever-abiding sense of His power, His wisdom, His goodwill towards me, His fatherly kindness? If men had these feelings to the full, would not these feelings reach to their children? Would they not say to them, the bone of my bone, the second self of ourselves, God reigns? And he shall be to them because of my faith all that he is to me? Because of my trust in him for them, therefore the Almighty power shall judge them, therefore my faith shall bring upon them blessings, therefore they shall not be excluded from the covenant in which I am, but with me shall enjoy all its privileges; and the eternal power shall stand around them, the eternal wisdom guide them, and the infant soul, as well as the adult, shall feel the care of its Father in heaven. Would they not see this world as a place of trial, the Church of God as the house of an eternal Father, and babes as his children as well as full grown men. And instead of looking upon the world as a waste, wherein chance and circumstances reign, recognize the fact by faith, that there is no chance, but that all things are guided by him; and that, therefore, their children vowed to God in holy baptism, sealed with his name, sanctified by faith, cannot perish, save of their free will they become cast-away, and fling

aside the salvation that is theirs by covenant. Surely this would be the feelings of those fully embued with the true and living faith. Whatsoever we may say, the baptism of infants is an act of faith, and without it such baptism is unmeaning and vague.

But again, there are other reasons, and one of them I may as well bring forward now. There is a doctrine that says, that God has predestinated a certain small portion of the human race to happiness, so that they are decreed of God from eternity to be saved, and must be saved, and the rest are decreed to eternal misery and must be damned, or else are past over, which amounts to the same. Now if that doctrine be true, what is baptism, and what is infant baptism—is it not useless, and is not the decree all and in all? Certainly so. For according to it, in the predestinate, God's Spirit works—in due time grace brings forth the fruit—they are baptized in his name, and they manifestly have alone the right to baptism—to them alone it is properly applied, for all the rest must perish.

Of course then, no parents can know that their children are of the number of the Elect, and to baptize them in God's name who may be children of wrath—to dedicate to God those who may be doomed to eternal misery—to make them members of his Church, and treat them as such, when possibly, from their infancy, the spirit of evil may work in them for eternal woe—this would be a mere mockery, and an inconsistent and weak proceeding.

Surely to those who hold this doctrine conscientiously and firmly, these thoughts must occur. They must say to themselves, “ We shall, as in duty bound, pray for them, train them, give them all the advantages we can give them, and then we shall see whether God’s Spirit works in them—we shall see if they be of the body of the Elect to eternal happiness, the fruits and signs of the Spirit, and then consistently and truly, they can take upon them *then*, the vows of baptism, and be made members of the Church.” So this predestination doctrine fully and consistently held, renegates and denies the baptism of infants.

And is it true? Has the babe been preordained to hell—for if the man has been, then has the babe, since the decree has gone out from eternity, and stands through all time, and therefore the babe at its birth is so preordained? No: this is the doctrine of the Fatalist, not the doctrine of the scriptures. There is a predestination in the scripture and an election. And every where they are called the Elect through the whole scriptures, who belong to the Visible Church Christ has upon the earth. They who are chosen by God to the glorious adoption of sons, to the privileges of the Gospel, to the means of grace, and all the aids and helps which, *in his Church*, God has given man to work out his own salvation by. And, therefore, all these helps, which in the first part of this treatise I have enumerated, all these are the privileges of the elect. And he is “ Elect ” who is baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, who has

these privileges by *Christian baptism*. To him they were given by God's decree, that by them he should stand, and by his own free will he should avail himself of them and be saved. And except of his own free will he cast them away, he shall be saved. All circumstances may be contrary—his nature may be rebellious—he may be left without father or mother to train him in the ways of God—he may be flung upon the world desolate and houseless—he may be exposed to evil companions, still the soul of God's election, *the seal of baptism*, is upon him, and all things shall work together for the child of God's Election; the Spirit shall struggle with him, the tide of circumstances shall fling him in the way of religion, the angels of God shall guard him, all things shall tend for his good, and by many paths and ways he knows not, shall the Almighty lead him, and, *save by wilfully casting himself away*, he shall not perish.

This is the true doctrine of Election; and because it is so, the Churchman feels that the enrolling the infant among the members of God's Visible Church upon earth, the body of the Elect, is doing a deed of faith, whose results can only be discerned by faith, but shall be fully manifest in eternity.

Again, there is another doctrine much in vogue, which also is an obstacle in the way of infant baptism—another doctrine I will not say, but a set of floating notions—and that is, the opinion ordinarily entertained about conversion. Now I am the farthest in the world from denying the fact that there

is a real and true conversion unto God, farther still from denying that there is a most important change in man's feelings and affections called change of heart; but this I will say, that the ordinary floating notions upon this point have been the greatest barrier that can be to infant baptism. It is as common a thing as can be, for members of the non-Episcopal sects, who are not Calvinistic, to say, when the baptism of their children is suggested to them—"It is better for them to wait until they are converted, and then they may be baptized in any way they like;" and undoubtedly the motive that lies at the bottom of such talk is their notions of conversion, combined with their want of faith, and their ignorance as to the scripture doctrine of baptism and its foundations. With regard to the last two things we have plainly spoken; how want of faith comes in, may be seen in the commencement of this chapter, the doctrine of baptism is enough explained in the commencement of the book.

Now with regard to the other points we shall speak plainly. There are three things mentioned in the scriptures—1st, Regeneration, or the new birth; 2d, Conversion; and, 3d, Change of heart. With regard to the first, we have explained what it means; that it takes place in true Christian baptism by the agency of the Holy Spirit, first, in planting the life of God in man's soul; and, secondly, introducing him into the Church of God, and its blessed atmosphere and influences. And we add, furthermore, that this cannot be done in

any other than the appointed way, for the means that Christ has instituted there is no alternative, no substitution of any other by the will of man in his interpretation of the scriptures. "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;" this is an exclusive and prohibitory declaration, which cannot be got over. Repentance may be of the sincerest, and faith the most lively, and therefore the man by them may be prepared for his entrance into the kingdom of heaven; but no repentance, however agonizing, no faith, however sincere, can void the ordinary commandments of God, and render the means of grace which he has instituted unnecessary.

But again, we acknowledge that there is a second process, "conversion;" and what is this? "The leaving off of sin, and the turning unto righteousness upon motives of religion." Now we say this, and boldly we assert the fact, that according to the scripture there is no "conversion" without a leaving off of sin, a casting aside of those sins that are committed by the individual; a reformation, it must be, of life, and that true and real, else it is no conversion. The leaving aside of sin, actual and real sin, under which the individual was in bondage, is the completion and the crowning part of true conversion. First, there is repentance from dead works; secondly, faith in Christ Jesus; and, thirdly, because of this, the leaving off of sin as the realizing test of repentance, the doing of good works as that which realizes and tests faith;

and without the abandonment of sin, without the doing of the works of the Gospel upon the motives of the Gospel, there is no true "conversion."

Thirdly, There is a state in which faith has become habitual, and Christian action habitual, in which the love of God and the motives of the Gospel ripen and rule in the heart of man. That is the spiritual kingdom of God dwelling in man, that state in which the virtue of Charity rules in him, to which none attains in its perfection, save he to whom the description given of charity is applicable ; and this is a state of degrees, none perhaps of mortal men ever having attained to it in its completeness, and yet every one beginning in it from the time he has *true* repentance, that is, repentance realized by abandonment of sin, and true faith, that is faith realized by Christian works. This I conceive to be the state called "change of heart," or "sanctification," or "renewal of the Spirit day by day," or "growth in grace," or "perfection," or "holiness," or "charity," or "love," for by all these names it is called.

And fully am I justified in this when I look at the human heart, even of the regenerate and the pious ; when I see the power of old habit, the many feelings which were wrongly directed, and now are to be trained anew ; the fighting and the struggles that all Christians have to encounter from within, and the means which the scripture enjoins upon men to use, the cautions that are given them, and the dangers that are set before them as a part of their lot ; when I look at all these things, I must



conclude that this latter process is, in the very best, a thing slow and gradual, of which man in this life is capable only in a degree, and in which, till the end of life, he must strive to rise and advance perpetually.

These, then, are three separate and distinct things, and yet, in the case of the ordinary notions upon conversion, they are all mixed up. He who is converted is led to believe that repentance, acute sorrow, we will say, for sin, and faith, strong belief in the atonement, is sufficient; for on the spot he is declared "converted," without its being seen whether his sins are abandoned, or the works of the Christian life are done. He is taught to apply to himself all texts that speak of change of heart, instead of being taught that his work is to labor and pray, and do the works of the Gospel, and seek the grace of the Spirit to aid him in that work of bringing all things into subjection to the will of God. And, furthermore, he is taught to apply to that mere repentance, without abandonment of sin, that faith without good works, the name of the new birth, or regeneration, so plainly applied in scripture to the birth of water and the the Spirit. No wonder that in such a mixture and confusion of scriptural ideas, that baptism for infants should be rejected, and baptism for adults become a mere form, and cease to be considered even a means of grace.

But it is worth while more fully to consider how this system puts an end to and destroys infant baptism. According to its practice, men must

acknowledge that preaching is taken to be the sole means of grace ; now, to comprehend preaching and be affected by it, manifestly the mass of men must be adults ; children, except the very premature, cannot be moved by it ; they have not the knowledge, they have not the acquaintance with the world, they have not the amount of actual sin, and they have not the passions that men have, or their feelings. As a practical matter, the vast mass of those converted at revivals must be adults.

But again, only those so converted, are Christians. Infants, then, must be excluded ; nay, the conscientious and religious mother and father must teach them so, nay, must teach them that baptism is nothing, that this is all ; must teach them that they are not Christians, that they have no right or claim to the privileges of Christians, but at some future time are to obtain them by this process. I will not stop to consider how this cuts away responsibility, how it sets them freed from Christianity and its duties ; for where there is no privilege there can be no duty, and no consequent responsibility. But this I will say, if this system be true, and men act consistently with it, there is and can be no covenanted relation between the innocent infant-spirit and the Almighty. The almighty power of the Father cannot arrange the affairs of the world to educate the infant's mind ; the almighty Spirit that sanctified John from his mother's womb, cannot sanctify the infant ; he that begot our blessed Lord, and brought it about that the almighty Word should be a babe in the womb, cannot plant in the

babe the seed of eternal life, or move and form by his eternal power the infant-mind to religion. He cannot introduce him to the mysterious privileges of Christ's Church; the ministry of angels cannot be aught efficient; the trainings of God's providence, the washing away of original sin, all these are nothing; and the home is no longer a temple of the living God, and the father and the mother representatives, and sanctified agents of Christ and the Church. Nay, more than this: knowing as we do that the sense of sin awakes in the child just so soon as responsibility awakes, and that this is practically a long time before "the conversion" which our dissenting brethren preach, the child is left to sin, without a remedy. All these things are destroyed, nullified, put out of the way, by the ordinary notions of conversion, and conversion confined to the adult.

It makes no matter that men say, "we do not so confine it." We admit that children may be converted, while they take it for granted that preaching is the sole means of grace, and confine the name of Christian to the men and women that make a profession of religion, &c. The result of their practice shows, that of their system only adults are capable.

But are infants or children capable of conversion—are they capable of repentance, and capable of faith? They are; but not under any system that shuts them out of God's covenant; not under any system that denies to them, because they are babes, the blessed privileges of that covenant. As

baptized in the Church by the true Christian baptism, the baptism of remission of sin, in this case, just as soon as the child knows what God is, just as soon as he knows that God's law is binding upon him, just so soon he is capable of being converted, for the almighty Spirit dwells in him, and aids his natural infirmity; and his relation to his father is to him an instruction of which he may be unconscious, of his relation to his almighty Father, his relation to his mother, of his relation to the Church. They tell him that he is a child of God, and therefore that he must obey God; they instruct him that such and such is the will of God, and that therefore he must act in this way—and he believes them; *is not this faith?* The belief of an innocent child, seated upon his mother's knee, and hearing from her of Christ, and how he was born and died, and *how we must obey his law*, and striving to do so under his mother's teaching and her guidance, kneeling at her knee, and with the child-like awe and reverence of which only children are capable, praying to his Father in heaven with upturned eye—is not this faith? Yes, it is—and each mother in the Church knows it by experience, for in that feeble babe's soul is the seed of heaven planted by the eternal Spirit at baptism; behind that feeble infantile germ of mind is the framing and moulding influence of the eternal Spirit; as in the ever-blessed babe of Bethlehem, by the influence of the same eternal God in the flesh, almighty, all-knowing, late a feeble suckling upon the knee of “her whom all generations shall call Blessed.”

Are not such infants capable of repentance? Surely we have seen it; we have seen the influence of human nature, which remains even in the regenerate, struggling and breaking through the law of God, as manifested to the child by the legislators God has appointed to childhood, the father and the mother; we have seen in the child sorrow upon the motives of the Gospel, godly sorrow; we have heard the blessing and instructions of the father and mother, and seen the prayer bringing down forgiveness and absolution; for, with Augustine, we do hold that prayer, with repentance and faith, brings true and real remission of sin. We hold, then, that children, so baptized, are capable of conversion; and more than this, that they are, in the majority of cases, "converted" actually and really, if they have a religious father and mother, and the home is what it ought to be, before they are seven years old. Is it so, we will ask, with the children of those who are under the ordinary notion? Certainly not—by our own experience.

Nay, we will go farther than this—we will say that, according to our own experience, the change of heart takes place in them, in the mass of cases, in youth. By the holy training of the home, the baptized child is taught to act upon the motives of the Gospel, to be obedient to the laws of Christ, upon principle, steadily and consistently to go according to his will, and this takes place in childhood and youth. We have known many cases of it, and we will say, as far as our knowledge is concerned, they who are born in the Church, and

are acknowledged to be most pious and devoted, in them "the change of heart" that comes from an obedience in all things to Christ's law upon principle, in them this change takes place before the years of maturity. That it should be so, we believe; that it is not so with the numbers of those who date their religion from their "conversion" at revivals, we believe to be a fact.

Now we have already, in more than one place, shown the adaptiveness of infant baptism to that crisis in the child's life in which the sense of responsibility, and of a law to be obeyed, and of sin, consequently arises; we have shown how the feeling that the child is a member of Christ, a child of God, an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, and the fact that it is so, work together. We have seen how this child may be converted, as a child; and we know enough of children to know how the principle of steady and consistent obedience to the laws of Christ may be established in the heart of the boy or the girl.

Now let the father or the mother consider what is the most dangerous point in the life of the young. Is it not the time when the passions awake? Surely this is time of peculiar danger to the religion and the morality of men. We may have new theories and notions as to the matter, but the old one of the Church, Father Augustine's, is true—"that the passions of the *fornes peccati*," "the fuel of sin." The experience of all men and women tells them this; their sins become habits, and vices, and wickednesses, and then all the frames of mind that

are against God's law are permanently founded. The word "morality," in the Unitarian sense, had been before that an adequate expression of man's condition; but after that, "religion" is the only expression that it is capable of. Now taking it as a fact, that in passing from childhood to manhood, the awakening of the passions is a storm that the moral nature of all must meet and pass through as best it can—which is best prepared to meet it, he who has been converted in childhood, and under the guidance of the means God has appointed, has learned as a principle to obey God's laws, to walk in his way, and to have recourse to his Redeemer and his Spirit in all things; he whose heart is truly changed, as I have seen that it may be changed; or that one who, as a babe, has been denied the precious privileges of infant baptism, as a child has been taught that he was no Christian, and as a youth, in consequence, has felt no allegiance to Christ, no aid of the Spirit, no blessedness in prayer—and all this because "his parents do not believe in baby-sprinkling?"

They who read this book can tell whether their system gives any aid to the youth at those two most important crises, the awaking of the sense of responsibility, and the awaking of the passions. I have looked at it carefully, and I have not seen that it does, and with regard to the last mentioned crisis, it has always seemed to me that the process they call conversion cannot be undergone at all save by those in whom the passions have already awakened. And certainly the mass of those that

are converted are those in whom that era has passed. With us, when the father and the mother do their duty consistently, "conversion" and "change of heart" takes place in childhood, and that most dangerous period is met with all the aids of religion, fixed by habit and established in principle.

And to this, more than any thing else, to this fact, that in the mass of cases the religion of the religious in the Episcopal Church dates before the awakening of the passions is due, the fact acknowledged by all, that our tone of piety is more calm, more stable, more quiet, than that of others. In fact, in such a case, that properly called fanaticism is impossible, even to those of the greatest fervor of natural temper.

We have digressed upon this point from the object of this chapter, but we hold ourselves perfectly excused by the importance of the subject. We return to it again: on the Calvinistic notion, infant baptism is and must be an inconsistent practice. On the ordinary "revival notion" of conversion, it evidently must be so also. Now we ask of the readers of this book to go over these grounds and to see whether it is not so; whether, by the believer in these systems, baptism is not made a mere form and a nothing, and consequently infant baptism is not altogether cut away? We demand of those that hold these systems, to recognize their own position, to see it clearly, and to know that, because of the system they hold, they deny infant baptism, and not to



think that they are arguing merely upon scripture, when they take for granted schemes of doctrine which, if the doctrine of baptism were as plainly stated as it is in this book, would cause them to interpret it another way. This is to be honest, and this we expect of every reader of this book.

We know men may perhaps feel angry with us for this, but still this is a fact, that men, honest and true, may imagine they are arguing wholly upon scripture, when they are merely speaking scripture after a theory they have received, upon very inadequate grounds.

We instance in our Church cases connected with men, whose piety, and honesty, and truthfulness, none doubt. Scott, the eminent commentator, a clergyman of the Church of England, was a Calvinist; he, and all that school, called Evangelicals, had signed the articles of the Church of England honestly and truly I believe; they denied however, the doctrine of baptism, as plainly written in her formularies as may be, yet they were men honest, and true, and pious; but they had a system preoccupying their minds inconsistent with their doctrine, and so were deluded. And so John and Charles Wesley, unquestionably honest and pious men, did the same.

Now if these men could do so, let the reader of this book think it no offence, that I caution him lest it may be so with him; that I ask him clearly to set before his mind whether he is arguing upon scripture as it stands in the plain literal sense, or is interpreting it by a system. Let him not be

offended that I demand of him to set the fact plainly before his mind, and having ascertained whether it is so or not, to consider his position in consequence of it. I demand of him then to put on the one side his theory of "predestination to hell or heaven," or his "revivalist theory of adult conversion," and on the other, the plain doctrine of the scriptures as to baptism, and make his choice. For this is a plain fact to my mind—the predestination theory is adverse to infant baptism—the conversion theory also is inconsistent with it—one or the other is right or wrong, but both cannot dwell together.

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#### THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

Systems as held intellectually always tend to be intellectually consistent; and, therefore, when Calvinism disengaged itself from the Church in the shape of Presbyterianism and Congregationalism, large masses, feeling the inconsistency, as we have stated it, became "Baptists," so that in this country all they that are "Baptists," save only a few, ought to have been Congregationalists and Presbyterians.

Still the system of the Church was made to correspond with human nature, that is, the whole man, not intellectually alone, but morally also, and physically. And, therefore, even in those that do hold Calvinism, a system intellectually inconsistent with the baptism of infants, there is a longing after that baptism. And infants are so baptized. We have spoken above of its inconsistency; in the text may be seen further proofs still; how a baptism of mere faith and repentance, and of no privileges, no grace, no remission, can be in any degree useful to infants, is not easy to see.

But, however, such a baptism is administered; chiefly, we believe, in accordance with the demands of the nature of man. The way it is defended is this—it is administered as succeeding circumcision, which was given to Abraham, and therefore upon the grounds of the "Abrahamic covenant."

Now if it be said, that the Christian covenant is the same with that of Abraham, and that the covenant of Abraham was one of faith and

spiritual, and that baptism succeeds circumcision, we have no objection in the world to it; but if it be said that, at this day, there are two covenants, "the Abrahamic," under which are baptized babes, the Christian, under which are "converted" and predestinate adults, we say, that a more monstrous fiction never existed. We say, that babes and parents are under the one covenant alike, blessed with the same privileges, and these spiritual; and are alike capable of them by their nature, and by the nature of the doctrine of baptism.

## CHAPTER II.

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### PART III.

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The Commission does not imply that Baptism must always be preceded by Belief.

AFTER the previous chapter, which shows the motives which induce men to deny the baptism of infants, because upon the notions there exposed, they must reduce baptism to a mere form, the examination naturally comes of the texts upon which baptism is denied. And the first and most prominent is the commission.

Matt. xxviii. 18—20. “And Jesus spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

Now, upon the various points of the commission, I would remark, and ask the attention of my readers. Now I would ask of the candid Christian to remark the connexion between the first and the

second clauses of that commission given by our ever-blessed Lord.

“All power is given me in heaven and earth,” I am by the gift of the Father “omnipotent,” and *therefore*, “go ye, teach all nations, baptizing them,” &c. The omnipotence of Christ has, as its consequence, the commission to baptize. The power and authority to baptize is an immediate consequence of his omnipotence. This connexion lies upon the force of the commission.

Now if baptism be a mere rite, a mere form, and is of no effect, what need of this connexion so solemnly stated? We read not that John received such a commission as the disciples did, prefaced with the authority of omnipotence; we read too, that John is greater than all the prophets, but “yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he,” the least minister of the kingdom that is. If John’s baptism, the baptism of mere repentance, and faith, be Christian baptism, how can this be? if Christian baptism be a baptism without privileges and without effects, whose sole end is a dedication of faith before the congregation, what need this solemn preface?

But if his kingdom be a real and true kingdom, the covenant a real and true covenant, binding upon the Eternal Father as upon us—if to those who after faith and repentance receive that covenant, these privileges are conferred by the Holy Spirit, and that Holy Spirit is almighty and eternal, sent by the Father and the Son, then the commission to baptize is duly prefaced by a declaration of

our Lord's omnipotence. If baptism be for the remission of sin, which none but God can remit—if it be for the application to the believing of the Atonement of the Almighty Son—if it be for the implanting of a spiritual life by the Holy Spirit, and the nourishing of it, and the work of baptism is done by the almighty Spirit, then well may the commission be prefaced by a declaration of His omnipotence—for to such a baptism who is sufficient? What power? Only omnipotence. Accordingly he says, "All power is given me—go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them."

And it seems to me, that if men had thought sufficiently of this, that the commission to baptize is connected with, and founded upon, the omnipotence of Christ; that it is a baptism "in the name of the Father (almighty,) the Son (almighty,) the Holy Ghost (almighty,)" we should have less discussion about the baptism of infants. Seeing that infancy places them not beyond the redemption of the Son, of which all men now acknowledge them capable—and if they can be redeemed by Christ's blood, why not baptized in his name? Seeing too, that infancy is not beyond the providential teaching and guidance of the Father—seeing too, that the feeblest infant has a spirit that can be wrought upon by the Holy Spirit, as we see was the case with John.

But persons will say, but this declaration of his omnipotence is not connected with the right to baptize exclusively, it is with the whole commission, it refers to teaching, to going forth in faith,

and so forth, not to baptism, which is only a form.

With regard to this we say, "baptism is not merely a form," as any one may see who will give a due examination to the previous part. It is in the effects which we attribute to it the work of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in their name, and therefore omnipotence is the preface to it.

Again, we say, that, admitting the preface to refer to the whole commission, baptism is therein, and to it as well as the other parts it must refer. We say that men can do all the rest, and have done all the rest of themselves and their own power unauthorized, but to confer Christian baptism is another matter; a commission is necessary on the one hand, and on the other, the pledged co-operation of the almighty Spirit. In fact, on no other idea than that of a baptism conferring supernatural and heavenly privileges, and wrought out therefore upon all by Almighty power, can this preface be sustained. This we look upon, therefore, as sustaining the doctrine of Christian baptism, and is not to be explained otherwise.

Another remark we shall make: the word all nations, is general in this commission: nation is an assembly of men, and women, and children, it must therefore be taken so; but, say they, the word "teach," limits it. Yes, to be sure, to those that are teachable, if the English word "teach" is the exact correspondent to the Greek; well, for argument sake, say it is. "The infants cannot be

taught, it must be adults." "Infants can be taught, there are infant schools in this day." Well, babes cannot be taught—not by man, but by God they can, by the Holy Spirit they can. Now, good reader, look at this—"teach all nations—baptizing them;" it does not say, first teach them, and then baptize them, but teach them—baptizing them. Now I, by baptism, dedicate an infant to God by the commission of the Almighty—I give him up to the eternal Spirit and omnipotent, to him who taught the soul of John before he was born, to him whose teachings can reach the heart and mind, even of a babe unborn. Do I, therefore, according to the principles of Christian baptism, "teach" that child, "baptizing him or not?" Certainly I do; the common sense of every man can see.

Even so, upon the translation "teach," the commission takes in infants when we hold to the true doctrine of baptism. But the Greek, though it may be translated "teach," is not exclusively this, it is more properly "make disciples"—"make disciples of all nations—baptizing them." This brings it out still more plainly, "make disciples of them—baptizing them." For in baptism the Holy Spirit, the Teacher, has the main work, and to him the work of Christian baptism is attributed. How then are they taught by baptism? how are they made disciples? Certainly if that teaching had reference barely to the instruction of man, if that discipleship only embraced that which we see, it were poor indeed, poor discipleship. Yet let the Christian take his faith, which is the eye of



things unseen—let him view the Holy Spirit who is poured out upon our sons and our daughters, who shall teach you all things—let him look at the course of God's providence, wherein all things work together—let him look to the ministry of angels—all these privileges, strictly coming under the privileges of disciples, and then shall he see why omnipotence is a preface to the commission to baptize—then shall he see how the Christian by being baptized is made a disciple *and taught*, baptism to adults and to infants, admitting to this teaching. Let him look to angel and archangel, to cherubim and seraphim, and the whole company of heaven, intellects far reaching, and wide working, and think that to them we are given up, and ask if to their teaching, or to the teaching of the almighty Spirit, or to the teaching of God's providence, aught is requisite save the possession of a soul that can be redeemed by the blood of Christ our Lord, and innocence from actual sin. I suppose this is enough in reference to that objection that rests upon the word teaching, and supposes that only adults can be "taught."

We take now the other version of the commission, Mark xvi. 15, 16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Therefore, say certain persons, infants cannot be baptized, for they cannot believe.

Very well: then must they be damned, because you assert infants do not believe and cannot, there-

fore by the second verse, they must be damned. "He that believeth not shall be damned"—infants cannot believe, therefore infants must be damned. Let those who argue in this way get out of the damnation of *all* babes that die in babyhood if they can. The old Calvinists were blamed because they said some infants were "elect," in their use of the word "elect;" and therefore asserted some infants or babes dying in infancy, were damned; but this notion asserts that *all infants*, dying before they can speak, are damned.

But, again: "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." "Simon himself also believed, and was baptized," therefore Simon was saved. Yes, but Simon fell away. Surely he did, but is not "shall" used there?

There is no getting out of this, no means of evasion: it must be possible that the faith of others will go for the infant, so as to qualify him for baptism, or he be capable of faith, or else all infants that die in infancy must, by the very terms of the commission, be damned. Let the reader think of it, let him think what a hideous mockery it is, that the very commission which the Lord of all mercy, he who blessed babes and loved them, should be so interpreted as to demand damnation upon the babes his blood redeemed. Men, it is true, do not press upon this now; they have omitted, they let it slip, but still by their principles they exclude infants, because they have not faith; theirs, forsooth, is "believer's baptism," exclusively and peculiarly. Pædobaptism is of course the baptism of those who

“do not believe;” can it be any thing else, than that they “who do not believe” shall be damned? Can Pædobaptists’ baptism be a baptism unto salvation? Certainly not. This odious and horrid principle may be smoothed over, but there it is and cannot be got rid of. He that denies baptism to babes because they *have not faith*, and *cannot have it*, by that principle and the second clause of this commission in St. Mark, dooms them to perdition. *The scripture is true*, and the principle is false.

False to the plan of redemption, false to the mercy of Christ our blessed Lord, false to the feelings of man’s heart, false to the heart of the father and the mother whose unspeaking babes are upon their knees and in their bosom.

We are led now to the second interpretation of that passage, the interpretation which, because the first is so odious, is now generally put forward. The interpretation upon which they found their title, “believer’s baptism.” The interpretation is this—“He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall be damned.” Belief is first in the sentence, and therefore must come first. *We baptize after belief*, and therefore we alone have true scripture baptism. Now let the candid reader remark this first, that there is no passage in the scripture that says *this* in express terms; the conclusion is an inference drawn; if that inference be correctly drawn, then it is true; if it be not correctly drawn, it is untrue. I that baptize infants, I deny the correctness of the in-

ference. I deny that in that sentence there is any thing inferring that belief should come first.

Now does that sentence assert that belief is a qualification for baptism, or what does it assert? On the plain face of the sentence it asserts *two qualifications* as requisite *to salvation*, one *belief* and the other *baptism*. “He that believeth”—here is one qualification; “and is baptized”—here is another; “shall be saved.” Will any man dare to say, that upon any fair construction of the language, upon any principles of law, or equity, or grammatical construction, that of two qualifications thus placed, we can make one of the two a qualification for the other? can say that one must come before the other, belief before baptism, or baptism before belief?

Now this is a book written for plain people, and for common sense people. Look at a sentence of precisely the same kind, expressing two qualifications—“He that professes his allegiance and is naturalized shall vote;” just the same as “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” Therefore, by the same way of arguing, none can be naturalized before they profess their allegiance; therefore infants cannot be naturalized. Again: “He that is industrious and honest shall succeed in business.” There being two qualifications for success, therefore by the argument, a man must be industrious before he is honest. And so, through a multitude of examples, of which any one may devise thousands. The error being this, that be-

cause two things are qualifications for a third, one of them therefore must be a qualification for the other.

How then are we to interpret the text? Just in the same way that justice and equity would require us to interpret any such sentence in other cases. The sentence is of authority, it prescribes qualifications, it is therefore "law," and that law *moral and spiritual*. If the two qualifications are there, then it is right; if, on the other hand, there be a moral and spiritual impediment, then the right is voided—if the impediment be physical, it does not void the right. He that through a physical necessity, such as invincible ignorance or impossibility of being baptized is prevented from it, he, if he believe, and have therefore the other qualification, he claims salvation, and his claim is valid by all principles of justice and equity. He too who is baptized, and yet owing to infancy, idiocy, or any other incapacity, is rendered incapable of believing, he too is saved under that law. And he that believeth not, through moral or spiritual causes, he shall be damned. Now let men examine this interpretation upon the ground of justice and equity, and they will see that it is the true and right interpretation.

Now I will put forward another consideration. Baptists say that baptism is "total immersion, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost." Now I will suppose a case of one so immersed, in infancy; he is trained up in the fear of the Lord, and believes—what comes of him? You

may say, "no case of infant immersion has occurred;" and I say, that the English Church, before the Reformation, immersed infants universally; I say the Greek Church does so now; I say that such immersion has been performed in Protestant Episcopal churches in America, and authority is given me, as a presbyter of that Church, to do it, as well as to any other clergymen of the Church, *and it has been done*. And what is the case with such a person, confessing their faith and being converted? The case is this—that by the law of Jesus Christ such a person "believeth," and is "baptized;" taking baptism in your sense of total immersion; and by the false gloss I have been exposing, such a person is not baptized; an absurdity which may be dwelt upon, and with it the text that says, ye have made vain the law by your traditions.

"He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." All we have from this text is, that there are two qualifications to a certain state—the state of salvation; nothing more can be got out of it. Upon the face of it, as we have showed, it cannot be said that either is first. As far as this text goes, there can be no inference made. This we leave to the common sense of every one.

But it will be said, does not faith go before baptism—ought it not to go before it? Certainly, in all cases except where there is a physical impediment. A physical impediment, from the very words of the commission, as discussed in the last chapter, from the very fact of the spirituality of

the law under which we are, does not invalidate the right to baptism ; but there can be, as we have before said, found no text in the scripture that asserts any physical condition whatsoever to be an obstacle to the operation of the almighty Spirit ; and therefore is there no text in the scripture that forbids baptism to infants.

Of course, with them that are not physically disqualified, faith is a pre-requisite, and we who believe in the baptism of infants, preach faith as absolutely necessary to them ; but we cannot go beyond God's law and God's word, we cannot establish a rule which breaks down the principles of that law, and makes it, not a spiritual, but a physical law. So far of the notion which says "that faith must, in all cases, go before baptism." And furthermore, we shall add one remark. Our Saviour and the apostles demanded faith as a pre-requisite of their miraculous powers ; but *in no case did they make such a demand where faith was physically impossible*—and so do we. The energy of the Holy Spirit is not to be stopped by physical or bodily impediments.

But it will be said, that in all the cases of baptism recorded in the scripture, faith comes first. Well, this is true in reference to those cases in which the conversations are recorded, for in that case it appears that the persons could speak, and were adults. But it is recorded that households were baptized, and *it is not said* that there were no children among them ; nay, the oldest translation says—"Lydia and her children were baptized ;"

it is *not said* that infants ought not to be baptized ; it is *not said* that infants *were not baptized*. Things which certainly, if any of the apostles were of the sentiments of the modern Baptists, would have been most abundantly reiterated. It cannot, therefore, be proved that in all the cases of baptism recorded in the scripture, no infants were baptized, or that a profession of faith, with their own mouths, did always take place.

And, as we have shown, the faith of parents, of sponsors, of the congregation, and of the clergyman, are enough for the babe.

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## CONCLUSION.

WE have now gone through the task as we had appointed it for ourselves ; and the peculiar nature of the track we have chosen to pursue, has, as it may be seen, precluded us from the ordinary course of argument that is usually pursued in this case. We have laid, as it may be seen, the main stress upon the doctrine of baptism in general, the literal sense of scripture, and the nature of man, considered as a domestic, a social, and a religious being ; and so far abstained from the mere task of confutation, as only to touch upon objections incidentally.

And, therefore, there are many branches of the argument left untouched ; such as the evidence for infant baptism in the first ages ; the relation of baptism to circumcision, and so forth ; all which, knowing them to be in our favor, we have omitted,



for the reason, that feeling the moral and religious to be a most important, and hitherto but little touched part of the argument for the baptism of infants, we have chosen to confine ourselves to this, that it might come with its full force upon men's minds, and then that afterwards, if they feel its weight, they may, as a separate thing, consider and examine these other parts by themselves. In which investigation many excellent treatises there are that will aid the searcher after truth; and we deny not that this we have excluded here, in order that men may not be turned away from the moral, and domestic, and social considerations upon baptism, to the logical and the controversial.

And for the same reason we have altogether omitted the question of "Immersion," one which is mixed up in a very strange way with that of the right of infants to baptism, in almost all the books we have seen, and yet is a totally distinct question. A question which is, to the writer of these pages, a very unimportant one indeed, as the law of the Church gives him the right to baptize by immersion infants or adults; and which, when the grand question, the one he has treated of, is felt as it should be, will be easily agreed upon.

For this book, therefore, he has to seek the indulgence of the reader. He is in a remote part of the country, far from libraries, and the advantages of literary advice, and encouragement which would have enabled him to realize his plan more perfectly; engaged, too, in labors that occupy his mind incessantly, and without that leisure which

is absolutely necessary to him that would bring any thing to perfection. And he feels that the plan he has adopted in this treatise is one which would require, both time, and leisure, and books, adequately to bring it forth in its due proportions.

Still, for all these disadvantages, he believes that as it is, with all its imperfections upon its head, it will be of service to the cause of religion and of the Church. He believes that, written plainly and earnestly, and for the mass, it will be of service to ordinary readers, and, perhaps, even to the more educated suggest some thoughts that may be of service to them. And therefore he permits it to go out to the world, trusting that, although written under many disadvantages and laden with many imperfections, still it may be of service to many persons, who are sincere and earnest in their search after truth.

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Your affectionate Prother,  
WM WHITE.

RT. REV. THOS C. BROWNELL.

I do cordially concur in the foregoing sentiments of the Preiding Bishop.

JOHN HENRY HOBART.

BRISTOL, Jan. 4, 1822.

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I am, respectfully, your Friend and Brother,  
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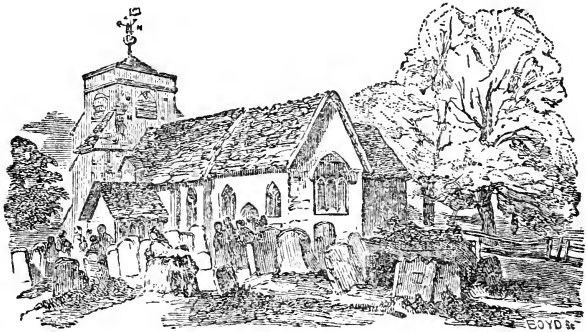
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